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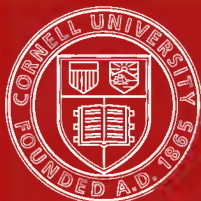
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A LADY OF THE OLD RÉGIME



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A Lady of the Old Régime

By

Ernest F. Henderson

New York

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1909

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To

HILDEGARD VON BUNSEN

AND MAY SHE SAY AS MADAME DID ONCE, "BUT IT
DOES GIVE ME PLEASURE THAT SO SENSIBLE A MAN
AS HE SHOULD CONSIDER THAT I HAVE *LUMIÈRES*.
IT MAKES ME RIGHT PROUD."

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A LADY OF THE OLD RÉGIME



CHAPTER I

VERSAILLES

IN December, 1722, a diarist, Matthew Marais, writes: "They have composed a satirical epitaph on Madame: 'Here lies idleness, the mother of all vice.' That is directed against her who did neither good nor ill to any one, and against her son, the Regent, of whom the same cannot be said." It is to this princess "who did neither good nor ill to any one" that the following pages are to be devoted; but while one must subscribe in general to the verdict, it only tells half of the story. For if Madame *did* nothing, she *was* a great deal. Her originality, her naturalness, her warm heart, make her stand out in bold relief against the artificial background of Louis XIV's court; while her keen observation and her picturesque language make hers one of the most noteworthy correspondences known to literature or history.

To make clear just who "Madame" was, we must go back for a moment to the beginning of the seventeenth century. It will be remembered that the Thirty Years' War began with the acceptance by a Palatine Elector of the throne of Bohemia, which had, largely on religious grounds, revolted against the Austrian rule after three Austrian dignitaries had been ignominiously thrown from the windows of the castle at Prague. This Palatine Elector, Frederick V, is known as the Winter King, the Jesuits at the time having uttered the true prophecy that his reign would endure but a single winter. At the battle of the White Hill in 1620 he lost not only his kingdom, but his hereditary lands as well, and retired with his wife Elizabeth, daughter of James I of England, to The Hague. There, save during the few months of the triumphal career of Gustavus Adolphus, at whose side he rode into Nuremberg in 1630, he remained inactive until his death.

By the peace of Westphalia in 1648 the portion of the Palatinate along the Rhine and Necker, including Heidelberg, Mannheim, and Schwetzingen, was given back to the Winter King's eldest surviving son, Charles Louis, who took once more the title of Elector and married a princess of Hesse-Cassel. To them was born, besides a son who need not concern us here, a daughter, Elizabeth Charlotte, the "Madame" already mentioned.

It may be said in passing that Elector Charles Louis



THE ORIGINAL PALACE

was a very emancipated person who did not hesitate to take Philip of Hesse, the ally of Luther, as his avowed model and openly commit bigamy. But apart from this he was a man of original ideas on almost every subject, and his daughter owed to him a great deal. Elizabeth Charlotte's early childhood was passed in the castle of Heidelberg, in which both of her father's wives lived at the same time. Then her Aunt Sophia, the later Electress of Hanover, withdrew her for four years from this unpleasant atmosphere, and when she returned at the age of twelve, her own mother had yielded the field. She was always treated as of better lineage than her half sisters and brothers, but seems to have loved them devotedly and to have enjoyed her life in Heidelberg with an intense enjoyment. She roamed over the hills and through the forest, and earned the nickname of *Rauschenblattknechtchen*, or sprite of the rustling leaves, a name to which she often fondly refers in later life. In short, she was a child of nature, as few princesses are.

Various projects of marriage were formed for her, one with the man who was later King William of England. But none materialized; and, according to her own account, her father was beginning to consider her a drug in the market, when news came of the sudden death of the first Madame, Henrietta of France, who was widely believed, and whom Elizabeth Charlotte always believed, to have been poisoned. Through the influence of an-

other aunt who was in favor at the French court, negotiations were soon begun between Louis XIV and the Elector, with the result that Elizabeth Charlotte was chosen as the wife of the King's brother.

Louis XIV insisted on a public abjuration of faith, which took place, but was lenient with regard to the dowry, leaving it to the Elector, whose heritage had been almost ruined by the great war, to name the sum. How small the financial circumstances were, may be gathered from a correspondence of Anna Gonzaga, the Palatine princess who had brought about the marriage, regarding the trousseau: "And after all, three or four thousand francs at the utmost will make good all deficiencies, and you know perfectly well that she has only six night shirts and as many for the day; and it will give rise everywhere to the pleasantry that she has not a shirt to her back, detracting from all that you are doing for Madame's happiness. . . . It is not necessary to give a bracelet, for Monsieur will give just as good a one, besides a thousand other things. But in the matter of linen it would be a disgrace to send a daughter of the Elector to the brother of the King of France with six shirts. A dozen, and this marriage may be made to serve the interests of the Elector."

The famous *grande Mademoiselle*, daughter of Louis XIII's brother Gaston, has given us the best description of Madame's arrival at the French court: "The King

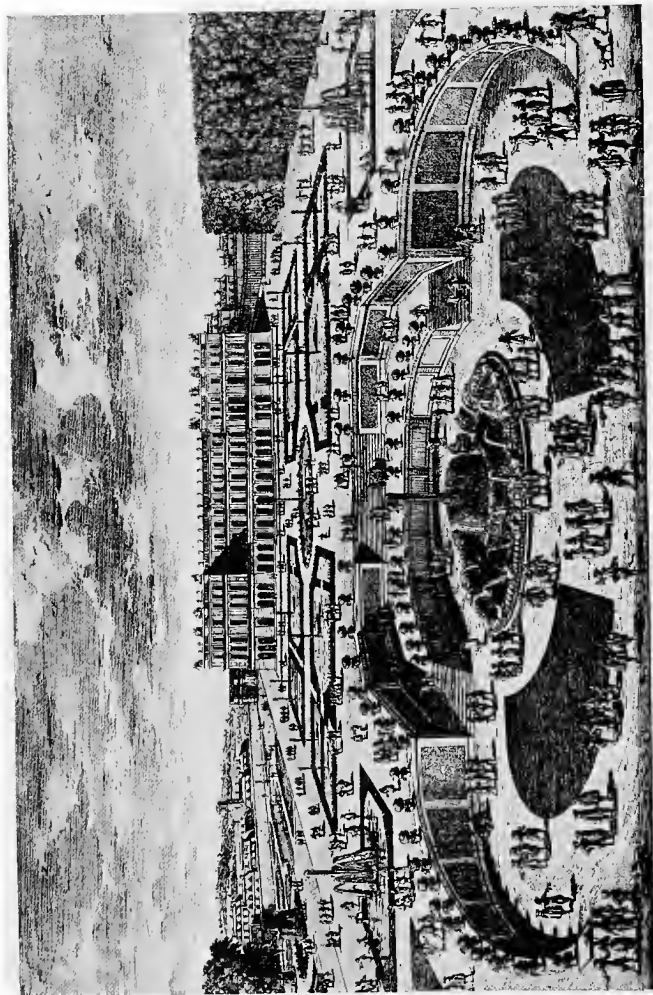
was at Versailles and, the next day, went to Villers Cotteret to see Monsieur and Madame, who had arrived there. He came back saying that he was charmed with her, declaring that she was a most witty and agreeable woman and danced well; in fact, that the first Madame was nothing compared to her. All who were with him said the same. She came over two days later; she arrived in a dress of brocaded silver, much better dressed than when she first saw Monsieur; for he says he had not found her so at all the first time. It was cold; she had not been wearing a mask; she had been eating pomegranates, which had turned her teeth purple. When one comes from Germany, one has not a French air about one. She seemed to us to look well enough, but Monsieur did not think so and was a little surprised; but as soon as she had breathed the air of France, it was quite a different thing. On her arrival in Metz she was dressed in pale blue silk, although it was All Saints' Day. Each country has its fashions. As they have so much fur in Germany, they thought that silk would have a more Frenchified air. . . . The next day we all went to see Madame, who did not look so well by daylight as by the light of the *flambeaux*. In the evening there was a ballet made up of several *entrées*, which was assuredly finer than anything she could ever have seen in Germany."

Monsieur and Madame had never seen each other until after they had been married some days; for it was be-

neath the dignity of a brother of the King of France even to go to his own wedding. Madame writes later, in another connection to be sure, "They are so stinking proud here and so 'way up and don't touch me' that it is unspeakable and inconceivable."

I find from a document in the National Archives that Monsieur's full title was "Philip, by the grace of God son of France, only brother of the King, Duke of Orleans, etc." His wife writes of him later, comparing him with the King: "Never were two brothers more totally different in their appearance. The King was tall, with light hair; his mien was good and his deportment manly. Monsieur, without looking vulgar, was very small. His hair and eyebrows were quite black; his eyes were dark, his face long and narrow, his nose large, his mouth small, and his teeth very bad. He was fond of cards, of holding drawing rooms, of eating, dancing, and dress: in short, of all the things that women like." Of his love of eating Madame writes on another occasion: "Ordinarily he would take chocolate in the morning and two heavy meals in the day, and, in addition, would always have his pockets and the tables in his rooms supplied with pastry and confectionery, fruit, and all sorts of sweetmeats, to devour at odd times."

Madame continues: "The King loved the chase, music, and the theatre; my husband rather affected large assemblages and masquerades. His brother was a man



THE PALACE AS MADAME FOUND IT

of great gallantry, and I do not believe my husband was ever in love in his life. He danced well, but in a feminine manner; he could not dance like a man, because his shoes were too high-heeled. Except when with the army he would never mount a horse; the soldiers used to say that he was more afraid of being sunburnt and of the blackness of the powder than of the musket-balls, and it was quite true." All this tallies with the description of Monsieur given much later by Saint-Simon: "He was a little pot-bellied man looking as if mounted on stilts, so high were his heels; always decked out like a woman; covered all over with rings, bracelets, and jewels; with a long wig all fluffy in front, black and powdered; with ribbons wherever he could bestow them and full of all sorts of perfumes." "Had I not been able to stand perfumes," Madame once writes, "I should long since have been dead; for always when I was in child-bed Monsieur came to me with perfumed Spanish gloves."

Sophia, Madame's aunt, who came incognito to Paris in 1679, gives us little glimpses of Monsieur and of his trifling existence. It was at the time of the marriage of his daughter to the King of Spain: "After dinner," writes the witty Hanoverian, "we went up to a great gallery where Monsieur had all the trousseau of Mademoiselle spread out, as well as her toilet set, which is so well gilded that I took it for gold, especially as I was

ordered to admire it. But Monsieur did not wish to deceive me and told the truth. Then I went with him into another room, where he showed me all his jewels and those he intended to give Mademoiselle. . . . As he has a particular talent for such things, he took the trouble to plan a reform in all my jewellery and wished me to have altogether modern settings. He took a great deal of trouble about it."

Monsieur then invited her to come incognito to the wedding at Fontainebleau, and as he "did not wish to be mortified over what he was about to produce at court, he desired to be consulted about the materials we should need for our appearance at so great a fête; and the discussion took so long that I was very late in returning that evening." When she finally reached Fontainebleau: "Monsieur first took me into a little room to show me his coat which he was having embroidered with diamonds. . . . After supper, although it was late, I still desired to see Madame before going to bed. I found her in her dressing-gown, and Monsieur, too, in a night-cap fastened with a flame-colored ribbon. He was arranging jewels for Madame, for himself, and for his two daughters. He was very much ashamed at appearing in this guise before me and kept turning his head away. But I tamed him by helping him adjust the jewels and arranged a spray for his hat with which he seemed very much pleased. Having accomplished a work of

such importance, I could sleep in peace, so I left and went to bed."

The next day after Monsieur had presented her to the Queen, he "took the candle and put it near the Queen's jewels, saying, 'Madame d'Osnabrück is so fond of jewels; look, are they not admirable?' I took it from him and told the Queen I could not look at her jewels because of my pleasure in looking at her."

When the future Electress left to return to Hanover, the King and Monsieur presented her and her daughter with "buttons and button-holes of diamonds such as it was the fashion to put around sleeves." Madame writes: "I take this good occasion to send you the diamond buttons from the King. Monsieur is very sorry he cannot in person show you how to put them on the dress or sleeves; but he has already arranged with Madame de Mecklenburg to send you a paper pattern of it. Then uncle, I hope, will ask again what your Grace means to do with the filthy things. I should often like to tell that to Monsieur, if I dared." Madame tells us that Monsieur would serve her exactly as a lady's maid would have done, insisting on her rouging and even on applying the rouge himself.

We have another criticism of Monsieur that is amusing. It comes from a Comte de Tonnerre, who was Monsieur's first gentleman of the bedchamber: "The Count had long stood very badly at his own little court," writes

Saint-Simon, "because of his *bons mots*. The saying had once escaped him that he did not know why he stayed on in this shanty; that Monsieur was the most foolish woman in the world, and Madame the most foolish man he had ever seen. Both learned of it and were very much offended. Yet he was about right."

Monsieur's temper must have been, at all times, something of a trial. "When his Grace slept in my bed," Madame writes, "I had to lie on the edge, so that sometimes I fell out of bed in my sleep. For his Grace could not endure to have me touch him, and if in my sleep I chanced to move my foot and do so, he would wake and scold me for half an hour. So I was heartily glad when his Grace made up his mind of his own accord to sleep in his own room and let me lie quiet without having to fear being scolded or falling out of bed."

When Madame arrived in France, late in the year 1671, the court was paying only occasional visits to Versailles, for the palace was being enlarged. Our engraving shows it as it looked in 1664. Madame writes, much later: "The King himself acknowledges that there are faults in the architecture of Versailles. The reason is that the King did not intend to build so large a palace, but merely to enlarge the little one that was there. But afterwards the King came to love the place, but could not stay without having more room for his court. So instead of pulling down the little palace and



PHILIPPE
DUC DE

DE FRANCE
ORLEANS. &c.

MONSIEUR

making a large new design, the King merely built around it, — hung a mantle about it, so to speak, — and that spoiled everything.” “They began,” writes Charles Perrault, the man who deserves immortality for first committing to writing our popular fairy stories of Bluebeard, Cinderella, and Red Riding-hood, “with some buildings which, when they were half finished, did not please and were at once torn down.” Madame writes in this connection: “All those who love building have this in common, that they like to change and begin over again. Our King here is that way, too. There is not a spot in Versailles which has not been changed ten times, and it often happens that it is no improvement.” But to the little château in the middle, with which memories of his youthful hunting days were bound up, the King clung with blind obstinacy. In vain his able minister, Colbert, wrote to him: “Everything they are planning to do is but patchwork and will never be any good. . . . Every one with a taste for architecture, either now or in the future, will say that this château resembles a little man with long arms and a big head—in other words, is a monstrosity among buildings;” and he urges him to tear the old part down and begin anew. “But the King would not consent,” writes Perrault; “in vain it was represented to him that a large part of it was threatening to fall. He decided to rebuild what was necessary and, suspecting that they were making this little château

more rickety than was the case in order to induce him to tear it down, he said with some feeling that they might tear the whole thing down if they wished, but that he would have it rebuilt exactly as it was, and without the least change."

By the time of Madame's arrival the work on the exterior, towards the park at least, was completed, though the great north and south wings had not yet been added. It had been begun in 1668. The portion now occupied by the *Galerie des glaces* was still an open terrace. The architect of this first renovation was Le Vau, and he, as well as Le Nôtre, who designed the gardens, and Le Brun, who decorated the interior, had been chosen because of their successful work at Vaux, the fairy-like palace of that Fouquet, Louis XIV's own finance minister, whom the King had disgraced and ruined just after attending a gorgeous fête in his house. Fouquet's motto had been a squirrel with *quo non ascendat?* He knew now.

We have a description of the palace of Versailles, as it then was, written by Félibien in 1674: "It is well first of all to remark that, as the sun is the King's device and the poets confound the sun and Apollo, there is nothing in this superb mansion that does not relate to this divinity. Thus all the figures and ornaments one sees are not at all placed there by chance, but either have something to do with the sun or are appropriate to the special places

where they are put. That is why, since the two wings of the great courtyard are particularly designed for the offices of the *Bouche*, the *Gobelet*, the *Pannetrie*, the *Fruiterie*, and the other offices of the King, those who are at the head of these great branches have had the four elements represented above the doors in these two wings; since, one more than the other, they furnish these offices with all that is most requisite for the nourishment of man. For Earth gives liberally of its animals, its fruits, its flowers and its *liqueurs*; Water furnishes fish; Air birds; and Fire the means of preparing the majority of these aliments. And since there are twelve figures on each balcony, each element is represented by three figures. Earth is represented by Ceres, Pomona, and Flora.... Water is represented by Neptune, Thetis, and Galatea.... Air is represented by Juno, Iris, and Zephyr.... Fire by Vulcan and the two Cyclops....

“From this great court one enters the little court where one ascends first by three steps, then, after crossing a broad landing, by five more steps. This court is paved with black and white marble with bands of another kind of marble, white and red. In the centre is a pool and fountain of white marble, with a group of figures of gilded bronze.

“The front and wings of the little château are built all of bricks and cut stone, and in the panels between the windows are an infinite number of marble busts on stands,

also of marble, for the adornment of the palace. Projecting from the front is a balcony supported by eight columns of jasperated marble, white and red. They are Doric columns with their bases and capitals of white marble. In the two angles of the front wings are two projections of cut stone supporting two little cabinets surrounded by cages of gilded iron, and below are two pools of white marble in the form of large shells in which are young Tritons spouting water.

“The principal façade which overlooks the *parterre* of water is adorned with three projections or balconies, each with four columns, which has given an opportunity to place twelve figures there; and this number of twelve decided them to represent there the twelve months of the year — all the more as this particularly accords with the sun which forms the main part of the King’s device. The months of March, April, May, and June are on the balcony of the pavilion to the right; the months of July, August, September, and October are on the balconies in the middle of the terrace; and the months of November, December, January, and February are on the balcony of the pavilion to the left. In the keystones on the ground floor they intend to represent heads or masks of men and women, from infancy to extreme old age — say, from twelve to a hundred years or thereabouts, because the year is the perfect image of the life of man.”



MADAME'S WINDOWS (Ground Floor)

Madame's own apartment, for the first years at least, was at the south-west angle of the middle projection of the palace. It was on the ground floor and was raised but a few steps above the terrace. When the Dauphin became of age, however, the space was needed for his more elaborate establishment, and Madame moved into the south wing. She made several subsequent changes necessitated by deaths in the royal family, but remained always, so far as I have been able to find out, on the ground floor.

The open terrace looking down upon the park was converted into the *Galerie des glaces* in 1679, although the very elaborate interior decoration was not completed until five years later. It was in 1679 that Sophia of Hanover made the visit to her niece of which I have already spoken. Her comments on Versailles are particularly amusing because of the discrepancies between her letters and her memoirs. The letters passed through the mail and were almost sure to be opened by the "black cabinet," as that department of the government was called. So to her brother the Duchess Sophia writes that Versailles surpasses anything one could imagine in the way of beauty and magnificence; that she had at first considered St. Cloud, Madame's summer residence, the finest thing in France, but that she had now been undeceived; that what the man in the *Visionnaires* had said of his palace did not approach the reality about Versailles. The *Visionnaires* was a play in which the King himself had

once acted. In her memoirs, on the other hand, Sophia speaks as though Monsieur had rather forced her to admire the beauties of Versailles, "where art has created more marvels than nature." "I should prefer St. Cloud if I had the choice," she writes, and her chief enthusiasm is for the good repast which "was worth all the fountains they had taken so much trouble to make go."

By her tact as well as by her wit Madame's aunt had made an excellent impression on the King, as this letter of Madame's will show: "In the *calèche* the King spoke all day long to-day about your Grace. He finds a horrible difference between your Grace and the Duchess of Hanover, whom he saw to-day. The poor Duchess was so shy that I was quite sorry for her. She did not know what she was saying, and kept calling the King 'sir.' The King looked at me and laughed, and said, as we drove away: 'Your cousin has none of the intelligence of your aunt. It is a pleasure to talk to the latter; but about the former I said to my brother, "Brother, come away; I confess I like intelligent people."'"

Madame's earlier letters, in which she would have been likely to talk about Versailles, have unfortunately been lost, and we have very few of her comments on the dwelling in which she was to pass more than thirty years of her life. She, too, preferred St. Cloud, because, as she explains, there was a better view and much more

shade. "I prefer trees and earth," she once writes, "to the grandest palace, and a kitchen garden to the most elaborate one with marble fountains."

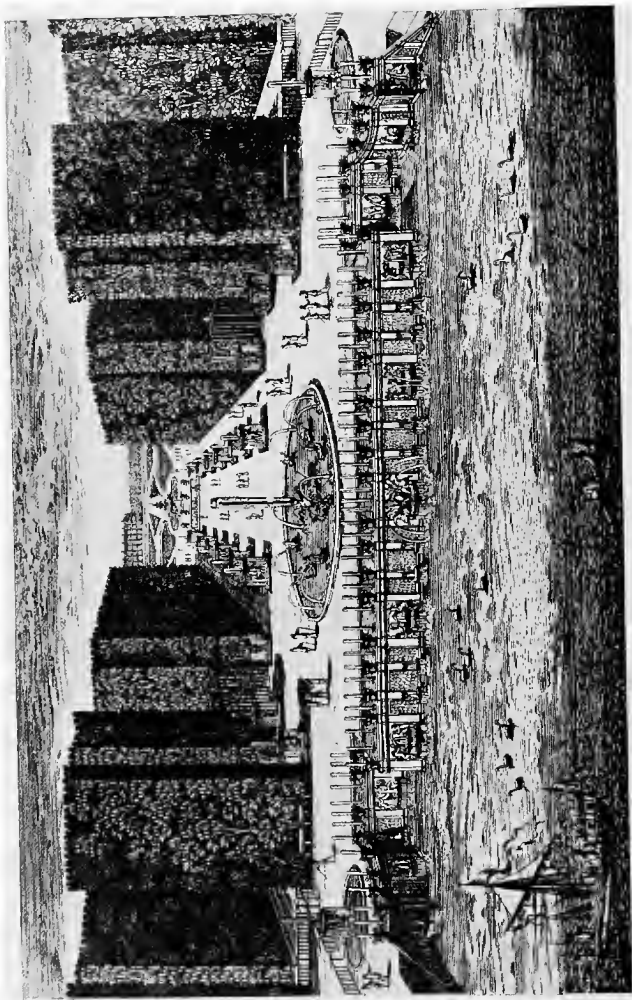
Madame has more to say about Fontainebleau, where the court went for the autumn hunting; about the Trianon, which adjoined the Versailles palace; and about Marly, which was only six miles off, than she has about Versailles. Fontainebleau she loved more than any place in France, partly because of the glorious forest, but also because the palace, and especially the great hall with the recessed windows, seemed to her very German. Of Trianon she writes in 1705: "I am very well lodged here, with four rooms and a cabinet, in which I am writing to your Grace. It looks out on the springs, as they call it: the springs are a little wood so thick that the sun cannot pierce it even at mid-day. Underneath are more than fifty springs, which make little brooks only a foot wide, so one can cross them all. They are bordered with turf and form little islands, which are large enough to put a table and chairs there and play cards in the shade." Her portion of the building, she explains, was the part known as the *Trianon sous bois*. She further tells us: "It is not here as at Marly, where no one can come unless designated. Here every one can come in the afternoon, and the playing goes on the whole time until supper."

Of Marly Madame writes: "This seems to me a topsy-

turvy world. I find nothing pretty here but the place. One must acknowledge that Marly is admirable. One cannot in the whole world see or imagine a more beautiful garden. It is much more delightful than the one at Versailles. It cost the King a good sum, too; and its keeping up comes to 700,000 francs. Everywhere are beautiful marble statues, and so many fountains of every kind that one simply cannot count them. I walk every evening for two good hours."

Of her own St. Cloud Madame writes in 1691: "Would God I could once pay my respects to your Grace here; afterwards I would gladly die. I am sure your Grace would admire the new park, for it is full of alleys and large fountains, with the finest view in the world. Behind the house Monsieur has cut down a hill, making a *parterre* and an orangery which are on a level with his room, on the one side, and with the gallery, on the other. Here your Grace would find room enough to promenade. Monsieur would take great pleasure in showing your Grace all this. Between ourselves I find our gardens here pleasanter than those of Versailles, although not so magnificent. They are nearer at hand and have more shade."

Formalism went so far in those days that, at Versailles at least, not a single tree was allowed to grow naturally, even those massed in the park being cut into great square blocks. This altogether prevented them



THE TREES OF VERSAILLES

from giving shade. The yew trees were cut into fantastic figures. From engravings we find that the trees in the park were planted when very small; but in February, 1700, Madame writes: "They have now found a way of bringing trees higher than a house from the woods and planting them; so that gardens are soon made. To-day we met more than thirty carts with such trees, which do not die when they are planted, but grow finely."

The grading of the land, the planting, the digging of trenches for the enormous net-work of pipes, the excavating for the different artificial sheets of water involved an enormous amount of labor. Dangeau speaks once of twenty-two thousand men and six thousand horses being employed daily, and again of thirty-five thousand men. Wonder has often been expressed that Louis should have chosen a site where there were so many natural obstacles to overcome. St. Germain, for instance, offered infinitely greater advantages; and the same amount of money expended there (Versailles cost 119,000,000 francs, equal to four or five times that amount to-day) might indeed have produced a bit of fairy land. One explanation offered is that from St. Germain the King could see the towers of the church of St. Denis, where his ancestors lay buried, and that he wished to escape the memory. It may well be that he wished a site where he would literally be monarch of all

he surveyed; for at Versailles he continued buying land until absolutely nothing obstructed the horizon.

All the moving of earth made Versailles for a time very unhealthy. The King himself had frequent attacks of fever. Madame de Sévigné writes in 1678: "The King wishes to go on Saturday to Versailles; but it seems that God wills it not, for the reason that the buildings cannot possibly be ready to receive him, and, also, because of the prodigious mortality among the workmen, of whom they carry off every night whole cart loads dead, as if from the *Hôtel Dieu*."

The garden and park were ready long before the château. They were laid out by Le Nôtre, the most famous landscape gardener of the age. Of him Madame writes in 1700: "I imagine my god-child, the Electress [later Queen of Prussia], has made her garden after Le Nôtre's plan, which was pretty. Good Le Nôtre is still living, but is beginning to be very much of a wreck and is losing his memory. He must be ninety years old."

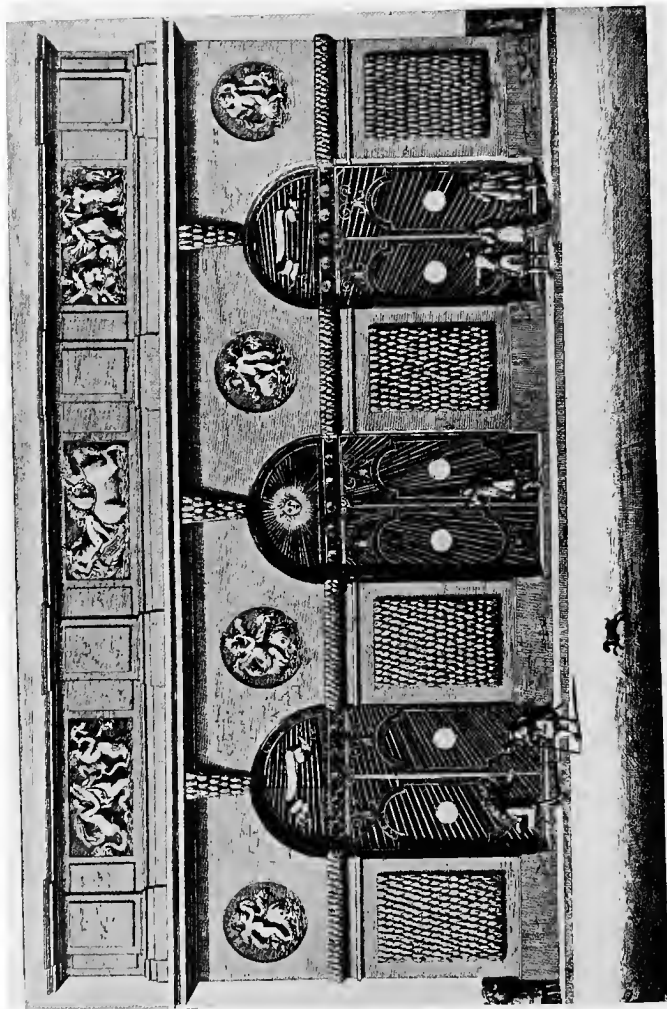
In the very year of Madame's coming we have this from a Venetian ambassador who has been invited to see the gardens at Versailles: "I thought best not to refuse this occasion of praising the royal magnificence, and I thought thus to make myself agreeable, the work at Versailles being an occupation in which the King delights. . . . The King arrived in a coach which he

drove himself, stopped the horses before the entrance to the grotto, where I had stationed myself to salute him, descended with a joyful countenance, openly manifesting his favor towards me, and asked me to walk through the gardens. He took me to walk among the fountains, of which there are a very great number, all adorned with metal life-sized statues, some gilded, others bronze color, with symbols suitable to the place and use. He kindly asked me my advice, and if I thought the arrangement just right. For two consecutive hours, escorted only by some gentlemen in waiting, he made me accompany him to the most retired spots, the most delicious retreats, where the solitude reposes him from the fatigue caused by his absorbing occupations. . . . His Majesty wished to complete his kindness to me by showing me, with the help of the architects, the plan of all his projects, and making known to me his vast intentions with regard to perfecting a domain destined to excel in magnificence anything in Italy or elsewhere, both in the abundance of statues and fountains and in the delightful and varied outline of the gardens."

Madame de Scudéry, the well-known writer, has a long description — half romance, half guide-book — of a visit to the gardens in 1668: "We were in the flower-garden with the gilded balustrade [she means the *parterre* to the south of the palace], bordered with cypresses and different bushes and filled with a thousand kinds of

flowers. The lower side is closed in by a breast-high balustrade whence there is a very rural view. This garden, as well as all the others, has its terraces bordered with copper vases painted like porcelain. Below this balustraded terrace is the garden of the orange trees. . . . On leaving the garden of the orange trees we went to see the labyrinth *en passant*, and, through green woods intersected by alleys and fountains, reached the head of this superb garden which they call the Horse-shoe because of its shape. Its quite royal magnificence shows that it could not belong to a private individual, however great he might be. The terrace which dominates it is an admirable point of view, nothing too far, nothing too near. It is bordered with wild bushes, always green. And this great amphitheatre of a garden, with three magnificent landings and three round beds situated in a triangle, has something indescribably surprising. Everything is smiling and pleasant there; everything tends to make one joyous and marks the greatness of the master. . . .”

Of Madame de Scudéry herself our Madame gives, in 1708, this description: “Madame de Scudéry was much older than Leibnitz, for she lived more than ninety years. I often saw her. She had a great long face that looked as if it were carved out of wood. She was very serious and deaf as a post; but when one induced her to speak, one saw that she had much intelligence.”



THE EXTERIOR OF THE GROTTO

Of the adornments of the park and garden of Versailles the most famous in its day was the Grotto of Thetis. It was in process of building when Madame arrived, but was destroyed in 1686 in order to make room for the north wing of the palace.

It was Louis XIV's plan to show Versailles to the world as the outward and visible sign or symbol of his reign. He himself had called his artists together and had begun his address to them as follows: "You can judge, sirs, of the esteem in which I hold you from the fact that I confide to you what is dearest to me in the world, my glory." We have seen that Louis' device was the sun — he had once appeared at a masquerade disguised as the orb of day, and once, after defeating the Dutch, he had had a medal struck off of the sun putting to flight the mists of the Lowlands. As in the palace, then so in the park, the achievements of Apollo were to form the leading motive. In the Fountain of Latona we have his birth; in the *Bassin d'Apollo* we have him rising with his coursers to begin his journey across the heavens. Charles Perrault, the collector of fairy tales, had invented the last stage in the allegory. He himself writes that since the King has taken for his device the sun surmounting a globe with the motto *nec pluribus impar*, and since the King desires to have a grotto, he, Perrault, has conceived the idea of having this grotto represent the place where Apollo turns in to rest after making the tour of the

earth, and signify that Louis XIV has come to Versailles for repose after having benefited the whole world. Perrault's brother then drew the design for the gate. La Fontaine, Félibien, and Mademoiselle de Scudéry all go into raptures about the grotto and its many ingenious devices. Mademoiselle de Scudéry writes: "The eyes are entranced, the ears are charmed, the mind is astounded, and the imagination is overwhelmed, so to speak, by the multitude of fine objects . . . at the entrance of the grotto appears a table of red marble; it is soon turned into a table of water by the aid of a jet of prodigious size thrown up with such impetuosity that one expects it to pierce the ceiling and mount to heaven. But besides these great sheets of water, these great shells, these Tritons, these Nereids, and this prodigious jet one sees four aquatic candelabra, if one may call them thus, which are admirably thought out. In place of lights they have each six branches in the shape of sea-weed, which throw out water in abundance. The streams, crossing each other, give a new and marvellous effect. Above the two shells of jasperated marble which one sees on entering at the two sides of the recess of the grotto, the King's monogram appears on a background of flaxen gray shell-work formed of little bits of mother-of-pearl and looking like real pearls. The closed crown above the monogram is adorned with fleurs-de-lis of mother-of-pearl mixed with amber which looks like gold. Several mirrors

encased in shell-work multiply still further all these fine objects, and a thousand birds in bas-relief — a perfect imitation — deceive the eyes. The ears are equally deceived; for, by a quite new invention there are concealed organs placed in such a way that an echo of the grotto answers across to them, but so naturally and with such exactness that, while this harmony continues, one actually imagines oneself in a thicket where a thousand birds are calling back to each other; and this rural music, mingled with the murmuring of the water, makes an inexpressibly fine effect.”

Félibien descants on the effect of the mirrors and declares that in consequence of them “this grotto appears to be of marvellous size, like several grottoes, indeed, forming in the midst of the water a palace of seemingly limitless extent.”

La Fontaine, in beautiful verse which we can only transcribe into plain prose, unravels the meaning of the great groups of statuary, by Girardin and Marsin, that form the chief adornments of the grotto: “When the sun is tired and has performed his task, he visits Thetis to take his rest. So it is that Louis goes to seek repose from his daily cares. The god, reclining under these humid vaults, is seated in the midst of a band of Nereids. . . . Doris pours water on the hand that he extends to her — Chloe catches in a basin the water that he sheds. To washing his feet Melicerte applies herself; Delphine holds

in her arms an antique vase; Climène heaves vain sighs in the presence of the god . . . and blushes, as much as ever a statue can blush. . . . The steeds of Phœbus, with flaming nostrils, breathe in ambrosia in neighboring grottoes. Tritons are caring for them; the work is so perfect that they seem to be still panting from the course they have run."

But Louis XIV's chief plaything at Versailles was the grand canal, an artificial sheet of water nearly a mile long. It was begun in 1667 and not entirely finished until 1680. The edge, throughout the whole extent, was furnished with a stone coping. The King had a number of boats constructed, splendidly adorned with painting, sculpture, and gilding. There was a frigate with thirty-two little guns, which latter alone cost more than 20,000 francs. There were real Venetian gondolas with real Venetian gondoliers, and there were galleys rowed by real convicts. The King's accounts, the *Comptes des Bâtiments*, mention two convicts each of whom is paid 350 francs a year for his nourishment. A guard of two hundred and fifty men, to serve by relays, was appointed to patrol the shore and, incidentally, to row the courtiers about. Moonlight excursions on the water and moonlight drives around its edge were among the amusements of the court.

By 1682 the south wing of the palace was added, and in 1686 the north wing, after which the façade stretched along for a distance of nine hundred feet. By that time,



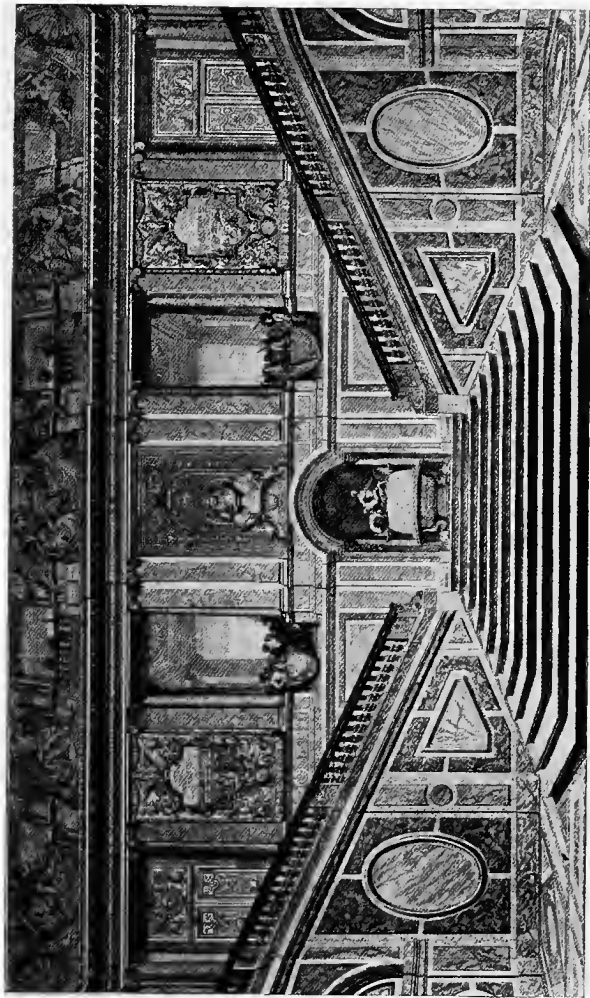
THE INTERIOR OF THE GROTTO

too, the interior decoration was practically completed. The number of artists employed was very great and among them was Rousseau, whose perspectives were considered so wonderful that the courtiers were often deceived — or professed to be so to please the King. Besides his *loggias* in the grand vestibule and a number of other works very remarkable for their true perspective, Rousseau painted the ceiling of the orangery at Versailles. Madame, in 1720, relates the following little incident: “Do you think, then, dear Louisa, that I never in my life sing psalms or Lutheran hymns? I know many of them by heart and sing them often. I find it a consolation. I must tell you what happened to me with my singing more than twenty-five years ago. I did not know that Monsieur Rousseau, who painted the orangery, was a Protestant. He was above, on a scaffolding. I thought I was quite alone in the gallery and sang out loud the sixth psalm: *In deinen grossen zorn, darin ich bin verloren, ach, herr Gott, straff mich nicht und deinen Grimm der gleichen lass wiederum erweichen und mich in dem nicht richt!* Scarcely had I sung the first stanza when I heard some one hastily run down from the scaffolding and fall at my feet; it was Rousseau himself. I thought he had gone crazy and said: ‘Good God, Monsieur Rousseau, what is the matter with you?’ ‘Is it possible, Madame,’ he said, ‘that you still remember our psalms and that you sing them? May the good God bless you and keep

you in these sentiments!’ And he had tears in his eyes. A few days later he ran away; I do not know where he went. But wherever he may be I wish him much happiness and joy; he is an excellent fresco painter, much esteemed.”

When Madame wrote these lines, Rousseau had already been dead for twenty-seven years!

Félibien writes of the grand apartments in 1674: “All these places are paved and adorned with marbles which the King has gathered from various parts of his kingdom; for in the last ten years they have discovered quarries of marbles of all sorts of colors and as fine as what they formerly brought from Greece and Italy. They have taken care to employ the rarest and most precious ones in the places that are nearest to the person of the King, so that gradually as one passes from room to room one sees more and more richness as well in the marbles as in the sculptures and in the paintings that adorn the ceilings.” Of these marble floors we are told, ten years later, that they have had to be removed: “As they were obliged to throw water on them to keep them clean, it was noticed that the water, penetrating the joints, rotted the wood of the ceilings and rendered the apartments below unsafe, so Louis XIV determined to change this flooring and substitute one of wood.” Another change was made with regard to the doors. These were originally of bronze *travaillé à jour*, or, in other words, with open work that



THE GRAND STAIRCASE

let the air pass through. But these rooms at best were bitterly cold in winter, and the draughts were found to be unendurable. So doors of wood, such as now stand there, were substituted — indeed one or two are actually of the period. Of the ceilings Félibien writes in 1674: “The ceilings are to be enriched with paintings of the best artists of the Royal Academy; and as the sun is the King’s device, they have taken the seven planets to serve as the subject for the pictures of the seven rooms of this apartment; so that in each they are to represent deeds of heroes of antiquity bearing relation to each of those planets, as well as deeds of his Majesty. One sees the appropriate symbolical figures in the sculptured ornaments of the cornices and ceilings.”

When Madame arrived, the “grand staircase,” as it was called, or “staircase of the ambassadors,” was in full process of construction; but so elaborate were the details that it was not completed until 1680. Dussieux, by the aid of Félibien, describes it in his history of the palace, and it is well to dwell on it here, for it is one of the vanished glories of Versailles. Madame de Pompadour made a little theatre out of the space, there being plenty of room for the scenery to move up and down; and Louis XV himself completed the destruction by making an elaborate suite of apartments for his very unattractive daughter, Madame Adelaide. One entered the huge vestibule from the court-

yard by passing through a triple arcade which was protected by bars of gilded iron. The walls of the vestibule were inlaid with the finest marbles; the floor, too, was paved with marble, and the cornice was ornamented with gilded bronze work. Eleven steps led up to the first landing, where the staircase divided, leading to the right and to the left. There was a niche with a fountain in the centre, and there were statues of gilded bronze. The steps and landing were paved and incrustated with rich marbles. One saw everywhere the King's monogram and his device in bronze. There were pilasters with bases and capitals of bronze, there was a bust of the King in white marble, and there were paintings of Van der Meulen made to resemble tapestries with rich borders. In the four *loggias* of Rousseau persons of all nations in gay costumes seem to lean over a railing covered with hangings rich in gold, and to be looking at the passers-by. The ceiling was painted by Le Brun, and of the latter's elaborate composition Félibien writes as follows: "As this place is the first one through which the King passes when going to the apartments of his palace, it seemed right that it should be ornamented in a manner worthy of the reception of this great monarch on his return from his glorious conquests. The painter has feigned that the Sciences and Fine Arts in the guise of the Muses have decorated this building, not as if for an ordinary fête, but for a day of triumph; and he has pretended that the



THE GROUP IN THE GROTTO

Muses, having finished their magnificent preparations and embellished it all in a thousand places with festoons and with vases full of flowers, had themselves remained as spectators of all that goes on."

Apart from æsthetical considerations, life in the palace of Versailles must have been attended with great discomforts. In spite of an infinitude of attendants — including everybody the court numbered about fifteen thousand persons — the corridors seem to have been kept in a state of revolting uncleanness, which may account for the frequent outbreaks of different diseases. Madame gives truly disgusting details and furthermore writes: "The King and Monsieur had been accustomed from their childhood to great filthiness in the interior of their houses; so much so that they did not know it ought to be otherwise; and yet in their persons they were particularly neat." The cold, too, was often intense, for, so far as we know, there was no means of heating those lofty apartments save by open fireplaces and portable braziers. Madame writes once: "It is such a bitter cold as cannot be described. I am sitting by a great fire with a screen before the doors, which are closed. I have a sable fur around my neck, and my feet are in a bearskin bag, and yet I am trembling with cold and can scarcely hold my pen . . . everything one tries to eat is frozen. . . . Every one sits by his hearth and coughs and spits: that is all the music one hears." It must be said that the

weather was quite unusually cold, — it was in 1709, — so cold that people stayed away from the court festivities, that in Paris the theatres were obliged to close, and that hundreds died of exposure. But on another occasion, too, she writes; “It is so bitterly cold that I think my brain must be frozen like the pools in the *parterre* in front of my window where they go on skates.”





CHAPTER II

FÊTES AND AMUSEMENTS

MADAME'S best friend at Versailles was the King himself. "It cannot be denied," she writes of him later, "that Louis XIV was the finest man in his kingdom; no person had a better appearance than he; his figure was agreeable" — she speaks of him elsewhere as tall and handsome — "his legs well made, his feet small, his voice pleasant . . . in short, no fault could be found with his person." But, and here she gives the key-note of his character: "When the King denied anything, it was not permitted to argue with him; what he commanded must be done quickly, and without reply. He was too much accustomed to 'such is our good pleasure' to endure any contradiction. He was always kind and generous when he acted from his own impulses. . . . His conversation was pleasing in a high degree; he had the skill of giving an agreeable turn to everything; his

manner of talking was natural, without the least affectation, amiable, and obliging. . . . Louis XIV used to say laughingly to Monsieur that his eternal chattering had put him out of conceit with talking. 'Ah, *mon Dieu*,' he would say, 'must I, to please everybody, say as many silly things as my brother?' . . . When he did not like openly to reprove any person, he would address himself to me; for he knew that I never restrained myself in talking, and that amused him infinitely. . . . He used to joke in a very comical and amusing manner. . . . The King used to take off his hat to women of all descriptions, even the common peasants. . . . He never laughed in any one's face." She has much to say about his ignorance, however: "Neither the King nor Monsieur had been taught anything; they scarcely knew how to read and write. . . . He did not know a note of music; but his ear was so correct that he could play in a masterly style on the guitar and execute whatever he chose." (Madame herself played on the guitar.) "If the King had been my father, I could not have loved him more than I did; I was always pleased to be with him."

Madame has great praise for the King's politeness. He never refuses people outright, but always says, *Je verrai*. However, she writes in 1720, "The late King could make no worse answer than *je verrai*; a downright 'no' would have been better, for with '*je verrai*' he never in his life accorded anything." "When you



THE PALACE IN 1688

meet him in the garden," she writes, "he does not tell you you are unwelcome, but if he does not ask you to walk with him, you must pass on." Madame says she has never seen him strike but two people; one was a pickpocket, the other an official who had refused him admission to one of his own fêtes.

That the King had an enormous conception of his own dignity is undoubted. That he ever made the famous remark attributed to him, *l'état c'est moi!* is highly improbable; but we have documentary evidence that shows how he felt about himself. Here, for instance, is the title-deed, preserved in the National Archives, by which he gave the *Palais Royal* to his brother, Madame's husband. It begins: "Louis by the Grace of God King of France and of Navarre, to all present and to come, greeting. Divine Providence having raised us to the royal dignity, the grandeur of which being entirely derived from its own should bear some relation and resemblance to it, has willed that we in a measure should imitate its care for all its creatures by our sentiments towards our subjects and particularly by furthering the interests of those whom it has distinguished above the rest by giving them great and illustrious birth and making them spring from the stock of kings, to whom, while they are their subjects, they nevertheless have the advantage of not being inferior in the glory of their origin . . . therefore we have resolved, etc."

Madame for a while was in high favor with the King. She writes contemptuously about the way the courtiers and court ladies treat her in consequence. At first they had so scorned a certain fur garment that she had hidden it away; now they are all copying the "delightful German fashion," and, indeed, we find *la palatine* the accepted name for a certain kind of fur wrap. After the battle of Consarbruck, in 1675, although it was won against the French themselves, all unite in praising the bravery of the Hanoverian princes. Madame writes to her aunt: "The whole court gapes at me, and I hear them say, as I pass, 'Those princes they are praising so highly are the uncles and first cousin of Madame.' And I myself am quite stuck up when I receive a letter from your Grace. I read it three or four times and choose the place where the most people are gathered. For some one usually asks me from whom the letter is. Then I say over my shoulder, 'From my aunt, the Duchess of Osnabrück.' Then everybody looks at me as a cow does at a new gate."

The King had Madame taught to ride, — an accomplishment to which her father had objected on the curious ground that her future husband, whoever he might be, might object to it, — and went hunting with her every other day. She became the greatest huntress at the court and laughed at wind and weather. "We may have a wet hunt to-day," she once writes, "for it is

raining; but as we are not made of salt, we shall not melt." She writes late in life that she has fallen from her horse twenty-five times, but has never been afraid. Once a frightened stag dashed against her horse's mouth, breaking his bit; but she leaned forward, passed the rein between the horse's teeth, and brought him to a standstill. She sometimes hunted for twelve consecutive hours.

It was a life of continual excitement that the court led. Madame writes in December, 1676: "We were busy the whole day, for from the morning until three in the afternoon we hunted; on our return from the hunt we went up to play cards; there we stayed until seven in the evening. From there we went to the play, which ended about half-past ten; then we went to supper and from supper to the ball, which lasted until three in the morning. And then we went to bed."

The card-playing was always for money. Monsieur was a daring gambler and lost large sums. The King was kept in check by the fact that all his winnings were the perquisite of his *valets de chambre*. Once, indeed, he is said to have lost so much that even he would have felt it severely, had not Madame de Montespan taken his hand, played through the night, and won back all but a few hundred thousand francs. The worst of the gambling, according to Madame, was that the barriers of rank, on which she herself came to lay more stress than even the King, were let down. People were admitted to

the King's card playing simply because they were rich. She tells it as a truly shocking fact that she has seen people playing who were not nobles at all. One, she avers, was the uncle of the King's fruit vender. Black-legs and thieves were sometimes of the party. Once jewels were stolen from the King's own hat. The courtiers, too, took their losses hard. Madame tells of four suicides in one year.

The balls were usually given in the *Galerie des glaces*, or hall of mirrors, which was two hundred and twenty feet long, one whole side being lined with mirrors. These were a novelty used in that way, and correspondingly expensive. After the original terrace was enclosed in 1679, the decoration of the *Galerie des glaces* took five years to accomplish. The ceiling was painted by Le Brun and represented the achievements of Louis XIV, — his crossing the Rhine, his joining the Atlantic and the Mediterranean by means of the Languedoc Canal, his victories over his different enemies. These paintings caused great offence to Europe, and one can readily understand that it was not pleasant for the various nations to know that they were depicted as under the heel of the conqueror. Every detail of the gallery was magnificent: the gilded cornice, with its hanging garlands, the marble pilasters, the bronze trophies, the sculptured cocks, emblems of vigilance, the blazing suns, the fleurs-de-lis.



LOUIS XIV

The furniture of the *Galerie des glaces* must have cost almost as much as its construction. It has all vanished to-day, but we fortunately have contemporary descriptions and also very minute accounts of the sums at which the different objects were valued. These have been published under the title of *Comptes des Bâtimens*. There were sixteen great chandeliers of silver, twenty-four *lustres*, as they were called, of crystal, and two great *lustres* of silver, each with eight branches. Of massive chiselled silver, too, were a great number of the chairs and benches; we find one bench worth 16,000, another 24,000, and another 35,000 *livres*. The *Mercure Galant* of 1682 speaks of enormous silver stands on which were candelabra and of great silver boxes for orange trees that stood on silver bases, four in a row, between each pair of windows. The curtains were of white damask embroidered in gold with the monogram of the King. The tables and vases were of porphyry and alabaster.

The lighting of the palace was in itself no small item of expense. On very grand occasions as many as five thousand candles were lighted in the *Galerie des glaces*; and when one remembers that candle ends were perquisites, and that candles might never be lighted twice, one can understand how, when Necker later undertook the reform of the finances, he found the expense of lighting estimated at 450,000 francs a year.

Louis XIV's enjoyment of his silver furniture did not

last long. In 1689, in straits because of his war with the Dutch, he ordered it all sent to the mint. "Even the toilet sets of the ladies are to be melted," writes Dangeau, "not excepting that of the Dauphiness." Two great balustrades of silver were also sacrificed, and there were eighteen hundred and sixty eight objects in all. The worst of it was that the returns were infinitely less than the things were worth. "The King told us this evening," writes Dangeau, on December 12, "that he had expected to get more than six millions from the silver ware he is melting up, but that it will not come to more than three millions."

There is one thing to be said about Louis XIV's extravagance in buying splendid objects; and perhaps his willingness to sacrifice them when the good of the state demanded corroborates what I am about to say. His main object was to build up the art and manufactures of France by encouraging them in every way. He was the largest single purchaser, and his extravagance was a settled policy agreed upon between himself and his great minister, Colbert. The latter endeavored, with considerable success, to naturalize in France the industries of other countries. Frenchmen were no longer to turn to England for leather, to Holland for woven materials, to Venice for mirrors, to Persia for rugs. Articles displayed in the palace of Versailles were advertised better than they could have been in any other way.

They were in demand at all the courts of Europe. In 1667 the French government had taken over the factory of the Gobelin brothers and had renamed it the "royal manufactory of the crown furniture." It fabricated not only tapestries, but also every kind of object in metal, marble, wood, agate, lapis lazuli, and mosaics, even locks for doors and bolts for windows. The King felt called upon to encourage the new enterprise to the utmost, and but for his wars the final result might have been very different.

The costumes at these balls in the *Galerie des glaces* were, of course, of very great magnificence indeed. The royal family, including the men, wore cloth of gold, cloth of silver, and velvets embroidered with gold; while jewels were attached wherever it was possible. But even ordinary nobles, like the Duc de Saint-Simon, wore garments, on grand occasions at least, that cost many thousands of francs. Madame de Sévigné once asserts that no one dared to wear material worth less than a hundred francs a yard, or even a hundred and fifty. She tells us further that the same costume could not be worn more than twice, or there would be humiliating references to the old-clothes man.

The King was fond of giving dances elsewhere, too, than in the *Galerie des glaces*. He would build a ball room for the night somewhere in the park. The one in our illustration is probably merely a temporary building,

though the place where it stood is still called the *salle de bal*. You will notice that only one couple is dancing: that amusement was always more for the spectators than for those who performed. A space, usually rectangular, would be reserved, with the King's arm-chair and that of the Queen at the head; the dancers faced them, while the rest of the court sat at the sides on stools or benches. At one of the largest fêtes the length of the place reserved was only fifty feet.

Madame has left two letters regarding court balls: "Thursday, immediately after supper," she writes, "the King took his seat in the salon [at Marly] which was arranged for a ball. Then the Duchesse de Bourgogne came in, prettily disguised as Flora with nothing but silk flowers, which were most becoming. She had many ladies about her, to whom it was not so becoming. Among the other Floras is the Duchesse de Sully, who is rather short and stout. Monsieur and I went to Paris the next day to hear mass and baptize the bell at St. Eustache. I nearly laughed aloud, for they had wreathed a garland round the bell and hung a piece of brocade from it. So the bell, too, is dressed as Flora. She was as like the Duchesse de Sully as two drops of water."

"The other day," Madame writes later, "I too had to put on a mask in my old age. My whole disguise was a piece of green silk. I bound it to a forked stick surmounted by a great rose of ribbon. The silk was



THE ROYAL FAMILY AT A BALL

open from the head to below the waist. I got inside with all my clothes, tied it round my neck and took the stick in my hand. My figure could not be seen, and, because of the height, I seemed thin. . . . I made the King quite impatient, for whenever he looked at me, I lowered the stick, as if courtesying. He was finally really vexed, and asked the Duchesse de Bourgogne, 'Who is that tall mask who bows to me every moment?' She laughed and at last said, "It is Madame." I thought the King would laugh himself sick. I played still another trick on him: some one took me out to dance; I took out the King. The Duc de Berry and three others had comical disguises: They were covered with pieces of gold, gold masks, and silver scarves, just like the gilded lamp stands. They had sconces on their heads and went and placed themselves in the four corners of the room."

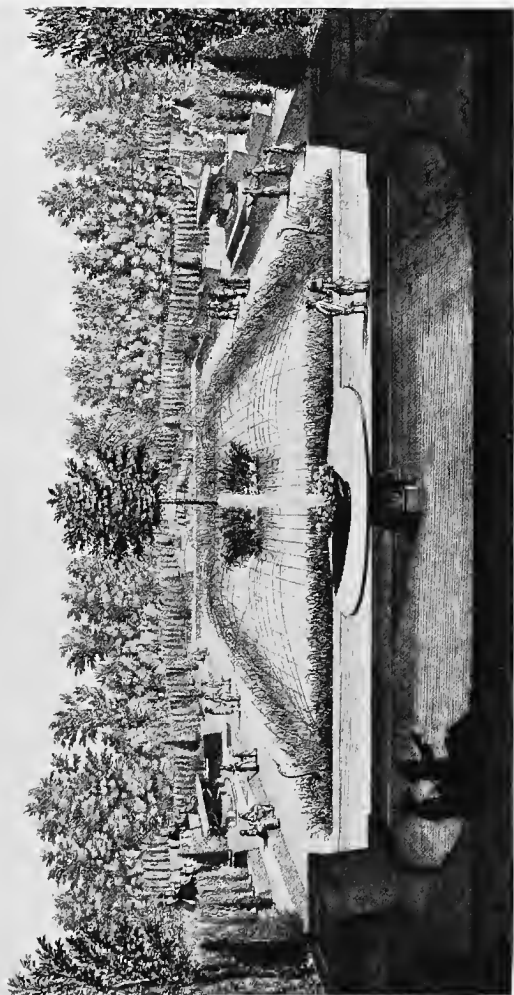
Fountains, windmills, yew trees, chess men, bats, were among the other disguises that we hear of at balls at Versailles. On one occasion all the ornaments on a mantel-piece were copied. Whole menageries, the whole seraglio of the Sultan, would come in. Once a ship sailed up to the door, and sailors and maidens alighted and danced.

After the ball there would often be a grand illumination with fireworks on a gigantic scale.

What Madame dearly loved were the fêtes held out

of doors by moonlight or in connection with grand illuminations. Of these Félibien wrote in 1674: "One of the things which is very remarkable in the fêtes and diversions with which the King regales his court is the promptness which accompanies their magnificence; for his orders are executed with such diligence through the care and special effort of those who are in charge that no one would believe it was not all done by a miracle. To one's surprise one seems to see in a moment, and without its having been anticipated, theatres erected, groves ornamented and enriched with fountains and statues, collations made ready, and a thousand more things done which seem impossible of performance—except with the expenditure of much time and with the trouble of an infinite number of workmen. Yet as often as not the court does not even notice the preparations for all these different fêtes; and the employment of so many workmen in the place where they are arranging them gives so little annoyance that one simply does not see them."

Dussieux, who gives this extract from Félibien, tells us in his history of the palace of the different diversions that fill the six days of fêtes given in the summer of 1674. The festivities began with a collation at the fountain called the *marais*, "the beauty of which was enhanced by an infinity of porcelain vases filled with flowers and by garlands of flowers. The fruits were



THE MARAIS

served in bowls and dishes of porcelain, in baskets, and in vases of all sizes made of real ice."

This *marais* was a curious basin or pool designed by Madame de Montespan. From every leaf of the tree in the centre, from the tip of every reed, spouted a jet of water. At the side were great marble buffets on which the water was made to whirl into the shape of crystal vases.

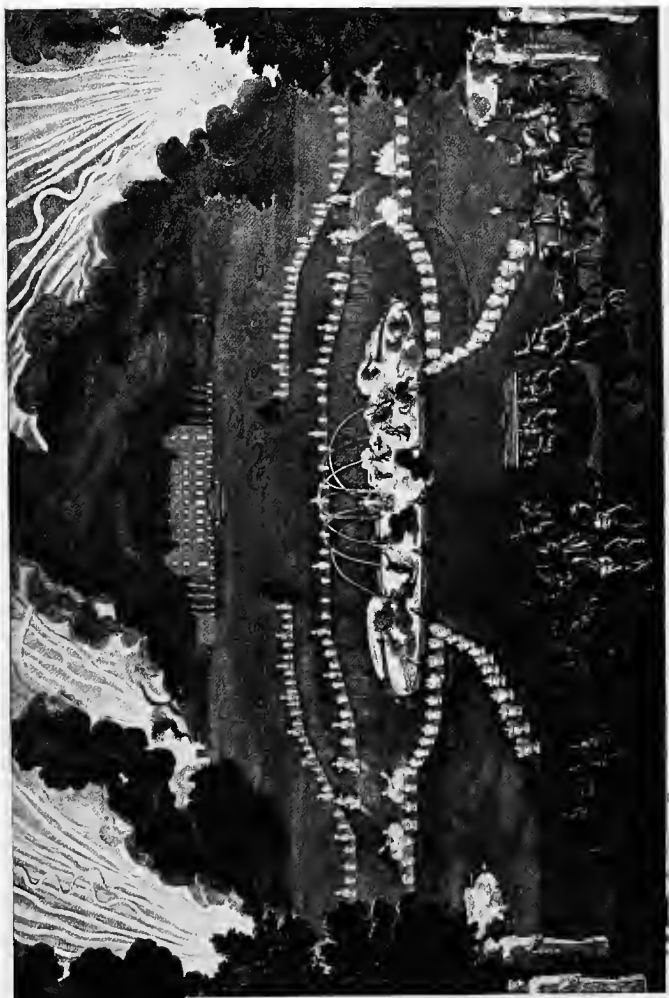
"Towards eight o'clock," continues Dussieux, "they went to assist at the representation of *Alceste*, an opera by Quinault and Lully, performed by the Royal Academy of Music. The theatre was prepared in the *cour de marbre*, all the windows of which were lighted by a double row of candles. The sides of the courtyard were decorated with orange trees, with garlands, and with great *girandoles* of crystal and silver bearing lighted candles. The marble fountain in the centre of the courtyard was surrounded by *girandoles* and vases of flowers. The water which escaped from the fountain to fall back into the pool was caught by vases of flowers in such a way that the sound of its falling should not interrupt the voices of the singers or the harmonies of the musicians. Everything was collected there, water, lights, flowers, that could form the richest adornments of a theatre. After the performance they went to supper, or *medianocche*, in the palace."

At the second fête, which was held at the Trianon,

they played an intermezzo by Quinault and Lully called the "Eclogue of Versailles"; at the third there was rowing in splendidly decorated gondolas to the sound of music, after which, in an impromptu theatre near the Grotto of Thetis, the latest comedy of Molière, *Le Malade imaginaire*, was performed.

"For the fourth day," writes Dussieux, "the King had given orders that the fête should be still more magnificent and more sumptuous than the preceding ones. The collation was served at the *Théâtre d'Eau*. The steps forming the amphitheatre served as tables to receive the food. Orange trees loaded with fruit and blossoms, apple and apricot trees, peach trees covered with fruit, and oleanders, all placed in great porcelain vases, three hundred porcelain bowls full of fruit, a hundred and twenty baskets full of pasties and dry confectionery, four hundred crystal cups full of ices, an infinity of caraffes containing cordials, made a very beautiful arrangement of form and color. The great spouting jets of this *bosquet*, with the great yew trees cut in sharp pyramids, added new zest to the collation."

Afterwards came an opera and then all "went driving in *calèches* through the park, valets lighting the way with torches, and assisted at fireworks set off over the canal. Then they came back to the palace and supped in the marble courtyard. This was lighted by a column of light placed on an immense pedestal, around which was arranged a table with fifty places."



ILLUMINATION AND FIREWORKS IN FRONT OF THE PALACE

On the evening of the fifth day "the company, in thirty six-horse coaches, drove in the park. They supped in a grove and then assisted, in a theatre erected in the orangery, at the performance of *Iphigénie*, a new tragedy by Racine. . . . Then they went to see the great sheet of water which forms the head of the canal illuminated in a manner which surprised every one; for, besides the front, the rest too was surrounded by a balustrade six feet high ornamented with fleurs-de-lis and with monograms of the King; the whole made in an extraordinary way."

Félibien has described the last day of these fêtes of 1674 with a vividness that only an eye-witness could have achieved: "When his Majesty left the palace at one o'clock at night, — and it was the darkest and stillest night there has been for a long time, — one saw in this great obscurity all the parterres in a tracery of lights. The great terrace in front of the palace was bordered with a double row of flames placed at a distance of two feet from each other. The balustrades and steps of the Horseshoe, and in general all the fountains in the lesser park, were surrounded by similar lights; and these being reflected in the pools gave double illumination. From the midst of these pools and of these lights one saw rising a thousand jets of water which seemed like flames of silver projected with violence, each shedding a thousand sparks.

"The lights with which the ground was covered marked

out new parterres and formed figures of fire in place of flowers and verdure. At the end of the grand *Allée Royale* the *Bassin d'Apollon* was illuminated in the same way; and, beyond, one saw the grand canal, which seemed in the distance a crystal mirror of vast extent. It was surrounded on all sides by luminous bodies, but shedding a gentle light and with none of the motion that one sees in ordinary flames. These bodies threw no shadows. They represented various figures which one could scarcely make out in the distance, their reflections appearing in the water, which was no less immovable than the light itself; so that the profound silence and obscurity in which one found oneself was very much as the poets describe the Elysian Fields, which they depict as a land lighted by a precious light and with a sun and stars all of its own."

Dussieux tells us that around the canal were distributed six hundred and fifty great stands of light, each nine feet high; that at the four corners of the cross-arm that leads from the *Ménagerie* to the Trianon there were great pavilions thirty feet long and twenty-two feet high, which emitted floods of light; that at the Trianon there was a car of Neptune and at the *Ménagerie* a car of Apollo; while at the very end of the canal was an immense palace rendered all luminous by lights in the rear.

One of the greatest of all these fêtes was given for Madame de la Vallière in 1664. It lasted three days. The subject was taken from the *Orlando Furioso* of

Ariosto, and represented the sojourn of Roger in the palace of the enchantress, Alcine. The rôle of Roger, at first at least, was taken by the King.

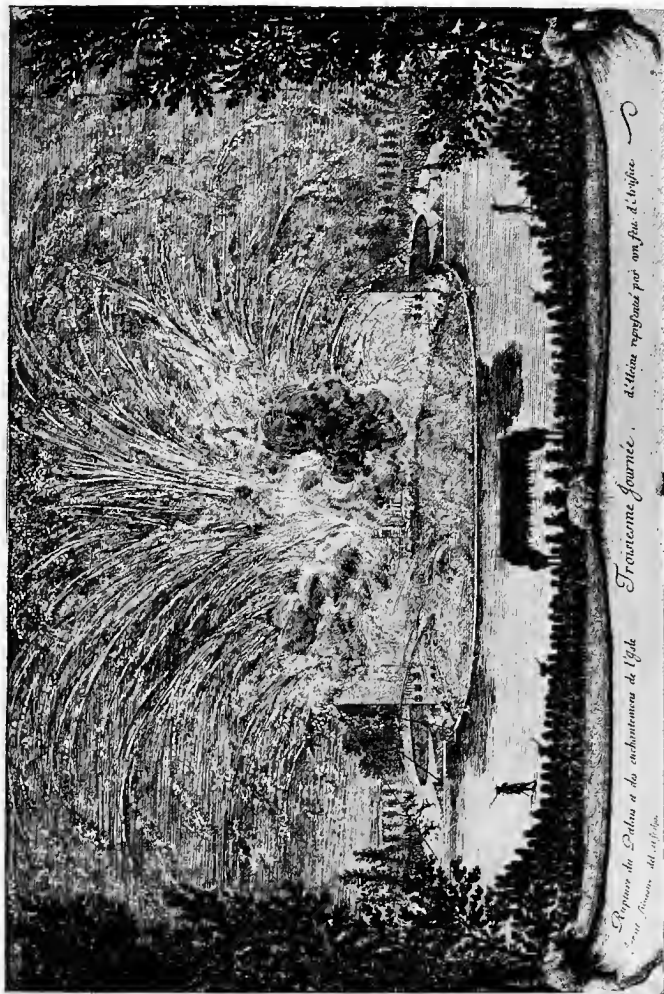
The entertainment began with a tournament on the *tapis vert*. The King and the princes and nobles who had been chosen to represent his Paladins entered all clad in most magnificent garments and glittering with precious stones, while their horses, too, were superbly caparisoned. After the Paladins came an immense car, eighteen feet high, twenty-four long, and fifteen broad and carrying Apollo, at whose feet were the four ages, the Age of Gold, of Silver, of Bronze, and of Iron. Father Time, who was in reality Louis XIV's coachman, drove the four splendid horses that were attached to the car. The twelve hours, the signs of the zodiac, and a crowd of pages surrounded it. The prize for the tournament, which was won by the Marquis de la Vallière, was a sword of gold studded with diamonds.

The second day was given up to the performance of a comedy by Molière in an impromptu open-air theatre with the grand canal for a background. This was followed by music and by dances executed by shepherds, shepherdesses, and fauns.

On the third and last day a great stage had been erected at the back of the *Bassin d'Apollo*. In the background was the palace of Alcine raised on a rock. On either side were masts from which hung tapestries, while below

were lines of rocks which served as a resting-place for the musicians. The pool itself formed the enchanted lake.

First came a concert, then three great whales emerged from the side of the palace, carrying Alcine and two companions on their backs and swimming to the shore. Then arose a dispute as to whence these monsters came, some saying that the fishermen of the Bay of Biscay had taken them and brought them there alive, others that they were fishes which had only recently been put in the pool, but had grown up very quickly. For, as Alcine and her companions explained, "Without much labor one reaps fertile harvests in the fields of Kings, and their waters are always so good and healthy that the smallest little fishes quickly become great whales." As Alcine returns to her palace, it opens and displays marvels of architecture. Then ballets are danced by giants, dwarfs, Moors, knights, monsters, and demons. Finally Roger, represented now by another than the King, prepares to depart. Alcine rushes up to prevent him, but he has on his finger the famous ring which gives him power to destroy enchantments. There is a clap of thunder and a flash of lightning; then the whole palace goes up in a magnificent burst of flames. "Never," says the contemporary description, "did one see a more agreeable conflagration. Air, earth, and water were covered now with flying rockets, and now with sheaves of flame; now a thousand serpents darted from the island over the heads of the spectators."



Le Palais de l'Alcine et des enchantemens de l'Isle
Troisième Journée. d'Alcine repassant par son feu d'Alcine

THE BURNING OF ALCINE'S PALACE

It was a bold stretch of the imagination to praise the water of Versailles. In Saint-Simon's time, at least, it smelled horribly, and there was never enough. It took long preparation and storing of water each time that all the fountains played. This was a sore point with Louis XIV, who greatly envied the superior resources of Chantilly. He spent millions on his water supply. The engineers once declared that it was possible to deflect a part of the river Loire to Versailles, and by a little hyperbole the prospect was held out to Louis of seeing ships sail direct from the Loire over the mountains to the grand canal of Versailles. One of the great glories of his reign had been the Languedoc Canal, connecting several small rivers and forming a continuous waterway from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. This had been completed in 1682 at a cost of 17,000,000 francs, of which, however, the king paid only half. The chief promoter of the enterprise — the De Lesseps of his day — was a certain Riquet who now assured Louis that all the necessary levels had been taken, and who agreed to carry through the enterprise for the sum of 2,400,000 francs. But Charles Perrault, whose interest in fairy stories had not made him unpractical, urged Louis to verify the measurements. This was done with great care, a new instrument on the lead-and-line principle, but with hair instead of string, being invented for the purpose, and the whole being placed in the hands of the Academy of Sciences. It was found

that to reach Versailles the water would have to run uphill, and the project was abandoned.

Louis then constructed the waterworks in the Seine at Marly. Dikes enclosed a whole arm of the river, raising the level of the water ten feet and making a waterfall which turned fourteen wheels, each thirty-six feet in diameter. These worked sixty-four pumps which pumped the water in conduits to a height of a hundred and fifty feet, whence seventy-two more pumps carried it to the Marly aqueduct. The cost was three and a half million francs.

But even then the supply was unsatisfactory in quantity; while the water that was used was already polluted by the drainage of Paris. Resort was had to catch-basins to preserve the rain-water, and Louis at last returned again to the plan of diverting some stream to Versailles. It was found that the little river Eure, running between Chartres and Maintenon at a distance of fifty miles, was eighty feet higher than the highest Versailles reservoir. But there was a valley three miles wide over which the water would have to be carried by an aqueduct held up by two hundred and forty arches of great height. It shows Louis' indomitable courage that this work was actually begun and carried on for three years. The question of labor was solved in a truly imperial fashion by ordering twenty-two thousand soldiers to the spot, to whom were joined eight thousand skilled laborers. Ter-

rible epidemics broke out, and between eight and nine million francs had been spent on the enterprise when the war of 1688 began, causing the King to withdraw his troops and greatly to retrench in the matter of expenses. The ruins of the masonry work are still to be seen.

One of the chief pleasures of Louis XIV's court was the theatre, and Madame especially found delight in the performances. The plays as a rule were by Racine, Corneille, or Molière. Madame writes of Corneille in 1677: "Since I see that your Grace is pleased at Corneille's plays again coming into vogue, I must tell you that they are now playing the older ones in succession. That is my greatest pleasure in Paris when I go there. Poor Corneille is so happy over it that he assures me it makes him young enough to write another fine play before he dies." Much later Madame writes of a curious bar to her enjoyment of the theatre in Paris, having stated elsewhere that the custom did not prevail in Versailles: "The people have the bad taste to stand and sit in crowds on the stage so that there is no room for the actors. It is very unpleasant. Yesterday we had a new tragedy, which is not bad, but the actors could not get through for the crowd of people."

One or more plays formed part of almost every fête that was given at Versailles. There was a theatre in the palace almost adjoining Madame's room; but plays were also given in temporary out-door theatres, and the arrangements would often be made by Molière himself. It is

safe to say that not a single evening passed without some form of entertainment. Three times a week took place what was known as the "apartment," so named from the grand or state apartments in which it was held. In one of her letters Madame has described this function with great detail.

Assembling at about six o'clock, — the ladies in the Queen's bedchamber, the gentlemen in the King's cabinet, — they joined forces in the *Galerie des glaces* and then marched in procession through all the rooms. In the last one, the *Salle d'abondance*, refreshments were served, while another room was supplied with quantities of light wines. This small repast over, the guests wandered back and joined in whatever form of amusement most appealed to them. The King himself often took a hand at billiards, while others sat down to cards or to one of the numerous other games for which preparations had been made. Madame writes: "Those who do not play, like myself and many others, wander round from room to room — now to the music, now to the games; for one is allowed to go where one pleases." We have an engraving of Madame and the other princesses listening to the music in the fourth room. Madame is in the arm-chair to the left of the picture. On her right is the Duc de Bourgogne, one year before his marriage; on her left is her daughter-in-law. Standing are Madame's two children.

The King quite often varied the entertainment at the



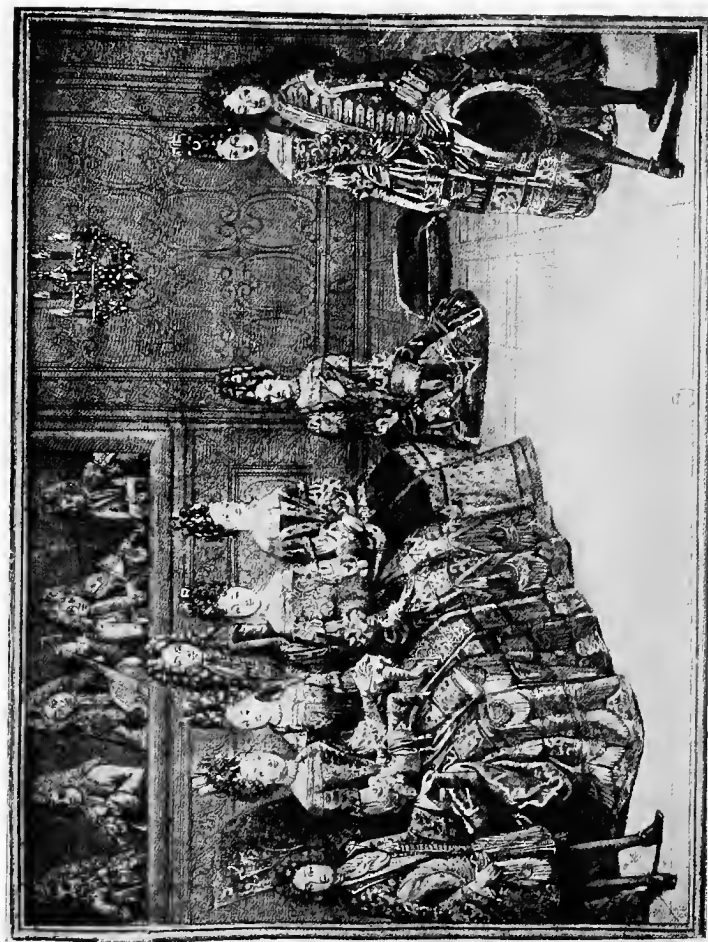
THE WATER-WORKS AT MARLY

“apartment” by holding a lottery in which all the lots were free, or by distributing rich gifts in some other fashion. This was always intended as a surprise, and once at Marly when the King found that his intention had been divined, and that ladies were applying in crowds for invitations, he countermanded the entertainment and gave the prizes to Madame and the other inmates of the palace. We hear of one occasion on which he distributed in one evening 60,000 francs’ worth of rich dress materials. These materials could be very rich indeed. Some of the silks were painted by hand. We hear of one dress of Madame de Montespan’s as “gold on gold, embroidered and bordered with gold, and trimmed with curled gold, which makes the divinest fabric ever imagined.”

Even the most sober accounts of the King’s munificence sound like pages from the “Arabian Nights.” Dangeau writes under the heading “Marly, 28 Jan. 1688”: “About six o’clock the Dauphiness arrived, having brought in her coaches thirty ladies who all supped there. A little after the Dauphiness’s arrival the King pointed to a great chest from China and said that a few trifles had remained over from the last lottery and begged her to be good enough to open it. She found there, first, some magnificent fabrics, and then another box in which there were many ribbons, and still another box with very beautiful head-dresses. Finally, after finding seven or eight different boxes or baskets each more beautiful than the other, she

opened the last one, which was a box of jewellery, very handsome; and in it was a bracelet of pearls, and in a secret compartment in the middle of the box a *coulant* of diamonds and a cross of diamonds, a magnificent one. The Dauphiness distributed the ribbons, muffs, and aprons to the ladies who had come with her."

In this generosity the King showed his usual shrewdness. Colbert writes: "The manufactories of draperies must be assisted with protection and with money, and encouraged to make fine materials for the King's dress . . . and should the King one day come to like bright colors the drapers are to be ordered to manufacture their cloths to suit the King." But the King in turn agreed to pay 800,000 *livres* yearly for the purchase of materials — a government subsidy, if one likes. These royal manufactories thrived as never before in French history. The royal lace manufactory established in 1670 occupied twenty thousand working women and marked an era in economic development by introducing a complete division of labor such as the old trade guilds had never permitted. And there is another side still to their beneficent effects. The royal manufactories, so long as they were thriving, staved off the persecution of the Protestants, who were the best workers. We have the regulations for the manufactory of cloth of gold, cloth of silver, and silk at St. Maur: the workmen are never to "discuss the mysteries



THE FOURTH ROOM OF THE "APARTMENT"

of religion," never to "speak irreverently of holy things." No workman shall give any opprobrious nickname to his companions. It is permitted to sing songs (undoubtedly Protestant hymns) if it be done in so low a voice that the neighbor is not disturbed. It is an attempt to establish a *modus vivendi* and to make the Protestants feel at home.

We have an engraving of the fifth room of the "apartment," where the princesses are listening to the rendering of a song by a young woman. The date is 1696. Madame is easily recognizable; she is now the first lady in France, and no other lady can have an arm-chair when she is present. The ladies wear muffs, even indoors; and the head-dresses are very elaborate, with numerous jewels. Madame herself writes about head-dresses in 1688: "I come to the matter of coiffures. I am sure if your Grace could see what pains the women take to make themselves hideous, you would laugh heartily. Even I cannot quite get used to such masquerading. Daily they pile it higher and higher. I fancy it will end by the doors having to be raised, or they won't be able to go in or out. When the women are in hoods, they look like the Melusina I once saw in an old book in the late Elector's library. The trains of the dresses, too, will finally turn into snakes like hers."

She writes again in 1696: "The head-dresses here are very high, but the hair itself is not piled as high as

formerly, and is not drawn so tight; nor are the head-dresses so straight up and down. They bend them forward now to such an extent that as soon as two women come close and speak to each other, the points catch so that one cannot get loose without calling a third person to disengage one. My daughter and I got stuck that way twice yesterday; it is really comical." It is interesting to note that this description was written in the same year that our picture was engraved, so that one can compare the two.

Madame wore her hair covering her ears. She once writes: "I have not adopted the fashion of having no hair over the face and of showing the ears. I cannot bear not having the ears covered." And again after an interval of nearly twenty years: "Here beauties are excessively rare. It is quite out of fashion to be beautiful. The ladies are partly to blame; for, by drawing back the hair tight over the temples and letting the ears *show*, they all look like white rabbits which are held up by the ears for fear they might escape."

One of the rooms in which the "apartment" was held was called *par excellence*, "the grand apartment." It is otherwise known as the *Salon de Mars*, and was in demand for concerts and for smaller balls. A balcony for musicians had been constructed at one end, and a *tribune*, or stand, for spectators at the other. It is in connection with this room that Saint-Simon re-

lates an anecdote which would seem incredible were it not elsewhere well vouched for: "The grand apartment, from the gallery, namely, to the tribune, was furnished in crimson velvet with *crépines* and fringes of gold. One fine morning it was discovered that these had all been cut off. This seemed astonishing in a place so traversed in the daytime, so well closed at night, and so carefully guarded at all times. Bontemps [the King's *valet de chambre*], in despair, made and instituted every kind of a search, but utterly without success. Five or six days later I was at the King's supper; between the King and me there was only D'Aquin, the King's first physician, and between me and the table no one. About the *entremets* course I saw a certain something, very large and apparently black, in the air above the table. What it was I could neither make out nor explain, because of the rapidity with which this great thing fell on the end of the table in front of the regular places of Monsieur and Madame, who were in Paris, and who always sat at the end of the table, to the left of the King and with their backs to the windows which look out on the great courtyard. The noise this thing made in falling, and its weight, almost broke the table and made the dishes jump, but did not upset one of them. By mere chance it fell on the table-cloth and not among the dishes. The King, at the sound, turned his head half round and without showing the very least emotion: 'I imagine,' he said,

‘that those are my fringes.’ It was in truth a package larger round than a priest’s hat with its flat borders, and in height — looking like a badly made pyramid — about two feet. It had come from far behind me in the direction of the door communicating between the two antechambers, and a piece of fringe which had become detached in the air had fallen on top of the King’s wig. Livry [the King’s first *maître d’hôtel*], who was on his left, noticed this and removed it. He went to the end of the table and saw that it actually was the fringes twisted into a bundle, and every one else saw it too. There was a moment of murmuring. Livry, about to remove the package, found a note attached to it, which he took, leaving the package. The King stretched out his hand and said, ‘Let us see it.’ Livry, and rightly, would not, and stepping back, read it in a low voice and gave it to D’Aquin behind the King’s back. I read it with D’Aquin as he held it in his hands. It contained, in a feigned handwriting, and with long letters like those of a woman, these words: ‘Take back your fringes, Bontemps, they are more trouble than they are worth. I kiss the King’s hand.’ The letter was rolled and not closed. The King tried again to take it from the hands of D’Aquin, who stepped back, smelled it, rubbed it, turned it over and over, and then showed it to the King, but without allowing him to touch it. The King bade him read it aloud, although he himself was reading it at the same time.



THE FIFTH ROOM OF THE "APARTMENT"

‘Well,’ said the King, ‘that is an insolent fellow,’ but in a perfectly even and, as it were, historical tone. . . . Never have they been able to discover anything more about this theft or about the singular boldness of the restitution.”





CHAPTER III

ETIQUETTE AND PREROGATIVES

THE position of Madame in France was so exalted as to make a short study of her prerogatives well worth while. In the first place she was a "Daughter of France." The *enfants de France* were the children of the King and the brothers of the King, as well as their wives and children. These were all entitled to be called "your royal highness."

The designation "Madame" was peculiarly distinctive. "Apropos of letters," she once writes, "when you write my address, put simply 'For Madame,' but not 'Madame d'Orleans'; otherwise they will laugh at it here."

Madame was provided with a household, or retinue, entirely separate from her husband's. She had her first almoner, her first equerry, her first master of the household, her captain of the guards, her squires and pages, her *porte-manteau*, her mistress of the robes, her maids of honor, her women of the bedchamber,

not to speak of her legal adviser, her treasurer, her body-physician, her apothecary, her barber, etc. In all it is probable that she had more than two hundred attendants. Later "Madames" had as many as two hundred and fifty. Each of the higher officials at least had to swear regular feudal allegiance kneeling on a cushion at her feet, while she held his hands folded in hers during the whole of the taking of the oath. At first glance it might seem as if such households were not expensive, for the incumbents paid large sums for their posts. One of Madame's equeries paid 126,000 francs, while in the King's household, the prices rose into the hundreds of thousands. Another anomaly was that an *enfant de France* had to have four sets of retainers, each serving only three months. "They have crazy customs in this country," Madame writes; "another thing I can never get used to is the buying and selling of posts in the household, and that even then one is only served by one's people three months, and has to change every quarter. What they have learned in the three months they lose again in the nine. It makes faithless servants, too, for they buy their posts to profit by them and make as much as they can. They don't allow themselves to forget that, and it teaches them to steal finely. . . . If one of us dies, as has just happened, all who hoped to profit by their posts are in despair."

Madame elsewhere designates an *enfant de France* as a

crowned slave. She writes once that the doctors insist on her going to bed early and not writing, as was at one time her habit, until three o'clock in the morning: "It makes me beside myself. But if I do go to bed too late, they tell my people I am committing suicide. Then those who have bought posts think I really am committing suicide and come and torment me." These retainers, then, took their pay in perquisites and privileges. At the end of each year all Madame's dresses, and even her laces, went to the mistress of the wardrobe; all her linen undergarments, skirts, etc., went to the first woman of the bedchamber. In the event of her death the master of the household had a lien on her silver, and the first equerry on the coaches unless they should previously have been ransomed for money. She complains that she has really no possessions at all. The furniture in Versailles is the King's; that in the Palais Royal belongs to her son.

Even the King and Queen had to give up their rich clothes every year. The King, who spent 12,000 thalers a month on his dress, had so many garments that they were eventually distributed among a large number of people. How rich the queen's garments were may be gathered from this detail: that at the wedding of Madame's step-daughter in 1679, her Majesty had a train of point lace edged with silver lace that was twenty-seven feet long. Madame's train on that occasion was twenty-one feet long.



THE GALERIE DES GLACES

It would require too much space to explain all the marks of distinction that were due Madame as an *enfant de France*. That she always drove in her coach with eight horses, indeed, was not one of these. She herself writes in this connection: "Since the Queen began to drive with eight horses I have never had less. The first to begin it was the late Duc de la Feuillade. We need it because our coaches are very heavy. There is no rank about it; whoever wishes to drive with eight horses can do so. As I said before, it is a good forty years that I have driven with eight horses to my coach; but in a *calèche* I usually drive with only six. It makes me laugh that you, dear Louisa, should think I drive this way with eight horses because I am the first lady. I am not too proud, but all the same I do keep up my dignity, as is proper."

Madame seems to have had a special crown of her own; we see it as an accessory of her portrait (see frontispiece). She also had a right, just as the King did, to a *daïs* and to a balustrade shutting off her bed from the rest of the room.

The King's bedchamber seems to have been regarded almost as sacred ground. It is to this room that the following description of Félibien applies: "A great arch coming down low serves, on the west side, opposite the windows, to increase the depth of this room and to make a more suitable place for the King's bed. Two figures of

women seated on the archivolt hold trumpets in their hands to represent fame. All the interior vaulted surface is covered with a gilded compartment, with frames and rosettes forming a sort of mosaic on a white background. It is there that they have represented, in the same expanse of the vault, France seated on a heap of weapons under a rich canopy. It is sculptured in wood entirely gilded. The rest of the same alcove, under the cornice which separates the vault, is stretched in winter with tapestry, and the bed they have placed there is new and of a design as beautiful as it is magnificent. It is of crimson velvet covered with embroidery, so interwoven with gold that one can scarcely discern the background. One sees, too, in this room four *portières* of tapestry with a gold background, the ornaments of which, ingeniously worked in, and the life-size figures, represent the four seasons.

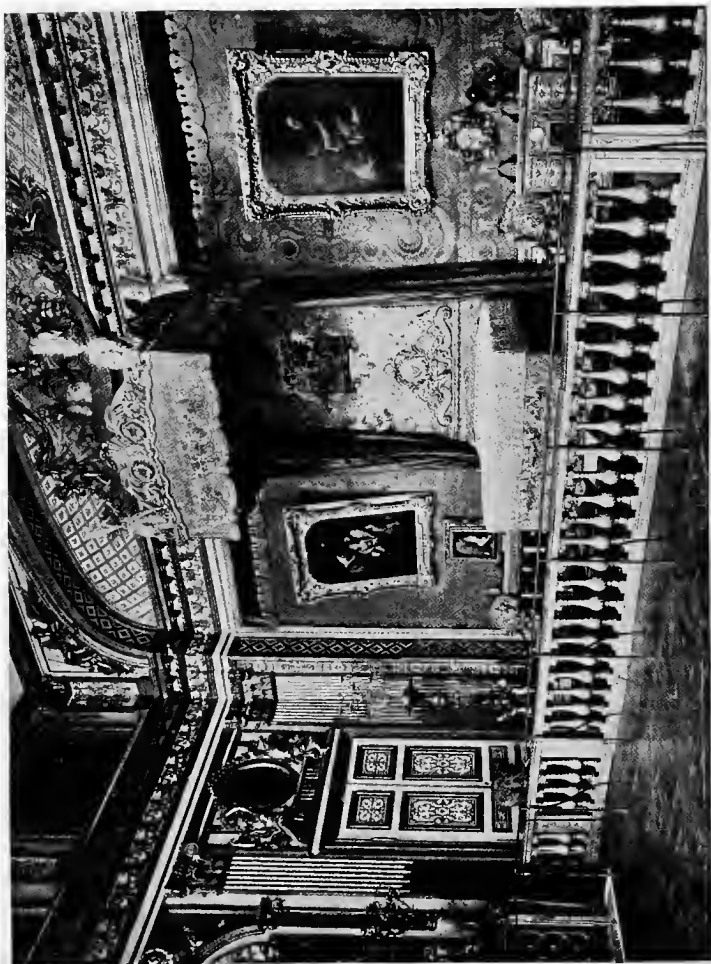
We learn from the *État de la France* of 1708, published with the royal sanction, that: "They usually make the King's bed while his Majesty is at mass. In making it a *valet de chambre* stands on either side and an upholsterer at the end. A *valet de chambre* sits within the balustrade to guard the bed, and at meal times one of his comrades is careful to relieve him. This *valet de chambre* has care of the bed and must prevent any one from approaching it at any part of the balustrade. . . . One of the *valets de chambre* on duty is to guard the King's bed

all day long, keeping within the balustrade. . . . The ushers are to see that no one puts on his hat, combs his hair, or sits down in the room, on the seats, on a table, or on the balustrade of the alcove. . . . When the King leaves Versailles for a few days, a *valet de chambre* remains to guard the bed and sleeps at the foot of his Majesty's bed."

When the King travelled, he was preceded by another bed and by a whole set of wall hangings, so that in the morning when he woke it was always amid practically the same surroundings.

Madame held her levee in the morning just as the King did, but of course with less ceremony. Late in life she describes her levees: in the essentials the proceedings were always the same, for it was a common thing in the ceremonial of the court of France to point to precedents a hundred or a hundred and fifty years old. Madame relates, then, that she would wake in the mornings at half-past four; would ring, have her fire made and her room put in order; meanwhile she would be saying her morning prayer. About half-past five she would rise, put on a good pair of stockings of otter skin, a cloth petticoat, and over this a long, good, wadded dressing-gown fastened at the waist with a great broad belt. Then she would have two candles lighted and sit down to her writing-table, where she would remain until half-past ten. At that hour she would send for her

honey water, wash herself as clean as she could, and rub her aching knee and calf [this is in her old age] with *eau vulnérable* which the doctor had prescribed. After this operation she would summon all her women of the bedchamber and sit down to her toilet, to which all persons, men and women alike, were admitted. She would then be combed and coiffed. Then all the men folk, except the doctor, barber, and apothecary, would go out, and she would draw on her shoes, stockings, and *caleçons* and wash her hands. Next, her ladies in waiting would come in to serve her, would hand her the towel for washing and the *chemise*, after which all the doctor tribe would go out, and the tailor would come in with her dress; this she would put on right over the *chemise*. She goes on to tell us that the moment she was laced all the men folk would again come in. The dress was so made that after the lacing she was quite ready, the skirt being fastened to the bodice with hooks and eyes, and the manteau, too, being sewn, or at least hooked, to the bodice. She knows she is old-fashioned, she writes, but she has no desire to ape the young people. She is so accustomed to the *caleçons* that she could not go without them for a single day. They had formerly been the fashion in France, and had been considered a requirement of modesty. Madame de Durasfort, one of her ladies, told her that her mother had worn them all her life, and she herself too — so long as her mother



THE KING'S BEDCHAMBER

lived. But now the fashion has entirely changed, and not a soul in France except her, Madame, ever wears *caleçons*. But she considers that they are healthful and prevent colic.

In Madame's early days, if it was her privilege to have the *chemise* handed to her by a lady of rank, she in turn had to hand the Queen hers whenever she was present at the latter's levee: "The Queen certainly did not wear a hair shirt," Madame once writes. "I have seen her naked hundreds of times when I, as is the custom here, put on her Majesty's *chemise* for her. It is a ceremony. The first woman of the bedchamber gives the *chemise* to the maid of honor, the maid of honor to me, I to the Queen. If neither I nor one of the *petits enfants de France* is there, but merely a princess of the blood, the first woman of the bedchamber gives the *chemise* to put on the Queen direct to her, and not first to the maid of honor. We have many distinctions like that."

Monsieur, who always handed the shirt very gracefully to the King, — one courtier was exiled because he did so awkwardly, flapping the fringe of his sleeve in the King's face, — was punctilious in requiring the same service from those next in rank to himself. The Duc de Bourbon had evidently registered a vow not to hand Monsieur his shirt, and kept away from his levee. But Monsieur, when in his dressing-gown, once saw him on

the terrace in front of his window, stepped out, engaged him in conversation, backed slowly into his room, threw off his dressing-gown, called for his shirt, and thus obliged *Monsieur le duc*, as he was called, either to hand it or cause a scandal.

At the King's levee a great number of people took part in the actual dressing, while a bevy of courtiers stood by. The duties of each official were minutely prescribed. One took the right, the other the left, sleeve of the night shirt to take it off; two others held the day shirt in the same manner, and two more held up the dressing-gown to momentarily screen the King from view. A set of men with one title attended to the King's right leg, a set of ~~men~~ with another to his left one. It took a man for each article of clothing, while four in turn had to taste the cup of bouillon or of sage tea that the King drank. The courtiers assembled first in the *œil-de-bœuf*, or antechamber, and were admitted by relays according to the kind of brevet that had been bestowed upon them. Some had the privilege of entering without knocking, — or rather without *scratching*, for the ceremonial prescribes that at the King's door one shall always scratch softly, and never violently knock.

After the levee came the daily visit to the chapel for that was required of an *enfant de France*. Madame had her own almoner, and liked him especially because he could say mass in fifteen minutes. In Versailles, of

course, she went to the King's chapel. The one that now stands there was not built until 1710.

The distinctions of rank were observed in chapel as well as elsewhere. The King and the *enfants* had the right, enjoyed by no one else in France except the clergy, of taking both the bread and the wine at communion; the *enfants* and the *petits enfants*, but no one else, might kneel on the square of carpet, the *drap de pied*, reserved for the King. The *petits enfants*, and presumably Madame herself, had a right to have special "clerks of the chapel," as they were called, to hold tapers for them, and to save them the trouble of making their own responses.

The attendance at chapel was looked upon as a necessary evil by the court, and Saint-Simon has an amusing anecdote bearing on the subject. "Brissac, major of the body-guards," he writes, "played the ladies a strange trick. He was an upright man who could not endure deception. It vexed him to see that all the *tribunes* of the chapel were crowded in winter at vespers on Thursdays and Sundays, when the King never failed to be present, and that scarcely one went when it was known in good time that he was not coming. Moreover, under pretext of reading in their prayer-books they all had little candles in front of them so that they might be seen and noticed. One evening when the King was expected at vespers, as they were saying in chapel the

evening prayer that precedes vespers when that service is held, and all the guards had been posted and the ladies had taken their places, the major arrives towards the end of the prayer, and appearing in the empty *tribune* of the King, raises his baton and cries aloud: 'Guards of the King, retire; go back to your halls, the King will not come!' The guards at once obey — low murmurs among the women, the little candles go out, and behold them all departed, save the Duchesse de Guiche, Madame de Dangeau, and one or two others who remain. Brissac had posted brigadiers at the exits of the chapel to stop the guards and make them resume their places so soon as the ladies should be out of hearing. The King thereupon arrives, is much astonished to see that the *tribunes* are not filled with ladies, and asks how it happens that no one is there. As they went out from vespers, Brissac told him what he had done, not without descanting on the piety of the ladies of the court. The King and all his suite laughed heartily. The story spread immediately; all those women would have liked to strangle Brissac."

Madame objected to going to chapel as much as any of the ladies could have done; but she never thought of shirking her duty. Unless prevented by illness, she went daily to chapel for fifty years; it was required, she tells us, of an *enfant de France*. Her abjuration at Metz, though heralded throughout France as a wonderful

manifestation of the grace of God, had been perfunctory in the extreme. "At Metz," she once writes, "I might have said, with Madame de Chantecroix, *que de sacrements à la fois!* for in one day they made me confess, commune, marry, and be confirmed — all of which they regard as sacraments." And again: "I do not know what they made Princess Elizabeth say in her abjuration. As for me they merely read something to which I was to answer 'yes' or 'no,' which I did as I thought best. Once or twice I said 'no' when they wished me to say 'yes'; but they let it pass. I had to laugh about it myself." Although her own coachman once denounced her as a heretic, she seems really to have been allowed great latitude. She writes in 1709: "I said recently to my father confessor, who tried to convince me of something about the saints, 'Is belief in it necessary to salvation?' He said, 'No.' 'Then,' said I, 'why do you wish to torment me needlessly?' He said, 'One must believe it to be a good Catholic.' I said, 'You are my third father confessor; two have already found my faith sufficient, why do you try to force on me something new?' He said I must think him very silly not to be willing to believe as he did. I said: 'That is just what surprises me, that with your intelligence you can believe such foolish things as are only fit for the common people. The way your nurses brought you up must have influenced you greatly that you believe fairy

stories about the saints rather than the word of God which so expressly forbids your making or bowing down to graven images or putting your trust in any one save His only Son. Had God wished us to put our trust in the saints, He would have told us so. But you cannot prove that He did, so I shall not change my devotions. It is all right for those who know no better; but I who do shall not allow myself to be put upon.' People came in and disturbed our conversation; so it stopped there." She tells us elsewhere of this father confessor that he has a "faith like an old nun," but that in spite of many a dispute they remain good friends, "for outside of religion he is the best and most honest man in the world . . . he understands chaff and is not easily angry."

She writes on another occasion: "My father confessor and I often have great disputes, but I don't let him get the better of me. What I can't endure is that he expects the Protestants to be damned, and I maintain to him that that is only monkish twaddle and quibbling, and that all true Christians, whether Catholic, Lutheran, or reformed, are all of one faith if they love God, do not harm their neighbor, and concern themselves with good works which are the proper fruits of faith. I tell him that his opinion will never save or damn any one; and that, whatever he may say, I shall never think differently. So your Grace sees that I often dispute the harder for all the tedium the Latin blaring

causes me. To save my life I cannot endure such priestly nonsense."

In another connection she says of the priests, "I know the vermin only too well." "Vespers, sermon, and mass may be good for the other world," she once writes, "but they are bitterly wearisome in this;" and she declares that she hates "to hear a fellow yelling in the pulpit whom one may not even interrupt."

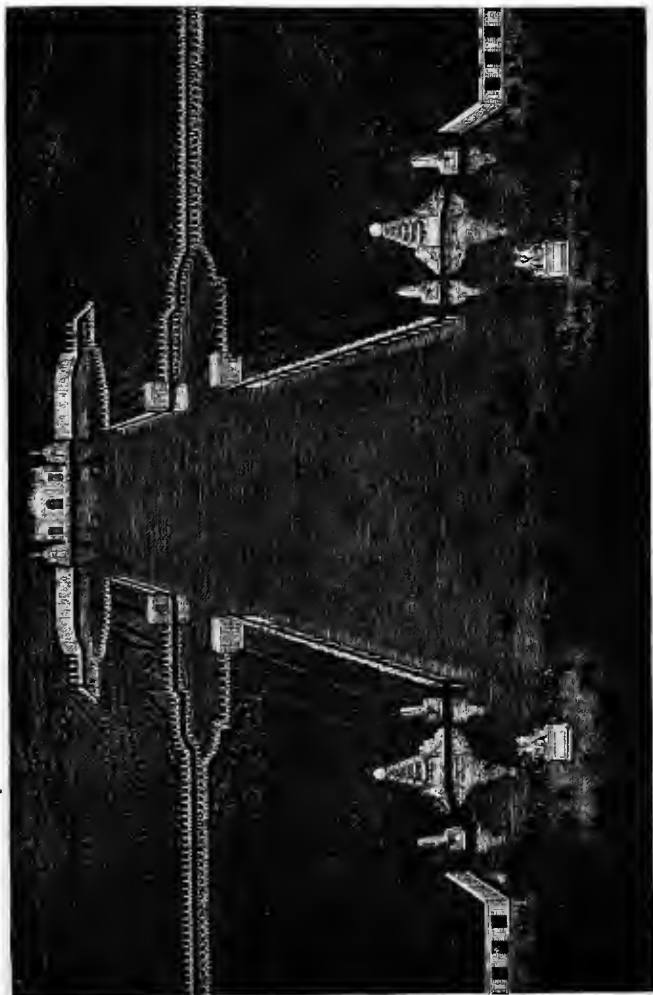
She had one refuge, sleep; and she slept even when she sat next to the King. "His Majesty nudges me with his elbow and wakes me up," she writes, "so that I can neither get wholly to sleep nor keep wholly awake, and that makes my head ache." But a month later she writes: "His Majesty lets me sleep in sermon now."

She, of course, does not like to have the priest come down hard with his fist on the edge of the pulpit, though occasionally she rises superior to it. "We have just come from church," she writes; "the preacher is said to have thundered the whole time and to have brought his fist down hard twice; but a sweet slumber hindered me from hearing it."

She has special aversions among the priests: "The Bible," she once writes, "speaks in such flowery and figurative language that one can never know truth from metaphor. But when I hear our King's long-eared father confessor talk [she means Père la Chaise] I don't consider it so impossible that Balaam's ass spoke."

All this is most remarkable when we think of the hundreds of thousands banished from France for their beliefs and of the incredible cruelty and severity. But the King had promised in Madame's marriage contract not to coerce her in religious matters. She tells us that once, indeed, he sent for her and said to her severely: "How is this, Madame, I hear your son thinks of taking a Jansenist into his service." "Oh, no," she replied, "I can assure you, sir, he is no Jansenist, and I even doubt if he believes in God." "Oh, well," said the King, "if that is the case, and you are sure he is no Jansenist, your son may take him."

After chapel came dinner. The King ate either *en petit couvert*—that is, alone while the courtiers stood round him—or *en grand couvert*—which latter ceremony interests us particularly, for in it Madame always played her part when she was in Versailles. The preparations for it were as elaborate as those for a grand mass: "The usher of the hall," says the ceremonial, "having received the order for the King's *couvert*, goes to the hall of the body-guards, knocks on the door with the wand which is the distinctive mark of his office, and says aloud, 'Sirs, to the King's *couvert*!' Then, accompanied by a guard, he goes to the *gobelet*. Then the *chef du gobelet* brings the *nef*, the other officers bring the rest of the *couvert*, the body-guard marching near the *nef*, while the usher of the hall, carrying the two table-cloths, is at the head,



AN ILLUMINATION OF THE GRAND CANAL

wand in hand. In the evening he holds also a torch." "This *nef*," the ceremonial explains, "is a piece of jeweller's work, ordinarily of silver gilt, made in the form of a dismasted ship. Tradition has it that this was a gift made to one of our kings in the sixteenth century by the city of Paris, of which the arms are a ship. However that may be, it is in this *nef* that are enclosed, between scented cushions, the napkins which are to be presented to the King during the repast. When the King is pleased to dine with full ceremony, it is placed on one end of his Majesty's table, as will be explained hereafter. On other days it is placed on the serving table. But wherever it be placed, all persons who pass in front of it, even the princesses, are bound to salute it, just as they are bound to salute the King's bed when they pass through his room. . . ." The *chef du gobelet* tastes the bread and the salt; "he touches also by way of precaution the napkins, which are in the *nef*, and the spoon, the fork, the knife, and the tooth-picks of his Majesty, which are on the *cadenas*." The *cadenas* is a gold box specially pertaining to the King.

Louis himself passed this regulation regarding the serving of the meat: "His Majesty's meat shall be served in this order, — two guards shall march first, then the usher of the hall, the *maître d'hôtel* with his bâton, the gentleman in waiting of the pantry, the comptroller general, the comptroller clerk of the *Office*, and others who shall carry

the meat, the equerry of the kitchen, and the guardian of the gold and silver plate, and behind them two other guards of his Majesty who shall let no one approach the meat."

Arrived at the table, the *maître d'hôtel* makes his bow to the *nef*, and the food has to be tasted again for fear of poison; three guards meanwhile have remained at the serving table to see that nothing is tampered with.

Probably no man that ever lived in this world was less alone than Louis XIV. At Versailles at least he had not a single moment of the night or of the day entirely to himself. In addition to those who were privileged to be at his rising, at his going to bed, and at the intermediate changing of the boots as well as at the meals, there were several persons whose duty it was never to let him out of their sight. There was the *porte-manteau* who was always at hand to bring cloak, sword or hat, muff, cane or gloves, cravat or handkerchief. If the King played tennis, the *porte-manteau* had to hold the balls, and afterwards, at his own expense (he had perquisites which compensated), to give a dinner to the master of the tennis-court and to all the officers of the wardrobe or the bedchamber who had done duty at the game.

The ceremonial tells us further of the respective duties of the captain of the French body-guards and the captain of the "Hundred Swiss": "The captain of the French body-guards marches behind the King, so as always to

have his eye on the person of the King, and the captain of the Hundred Swiss marches in front, so that in both directions they cover the person of his Majesty. . . . The captain of the guards who is *en-quartier* never quits the King from the time he rises and leaves his chamber to the time when he reënters it to go to bed." He "stands and walks always directly after the King and next to his person wherever he is outside of his chamber: at table, on horseback, in his chair, his coach, and everywhere else, no one whatever being allowed to place himself, or to pass, between him and the King. At the King's dinner and supper the captain of the guards *en-quartier* is always behind his Majesty's arm-chair."

Madame, too, had her captain of the guards. There is no evidence that she was in any way pursued as the King was, but she was doubtless well protected.

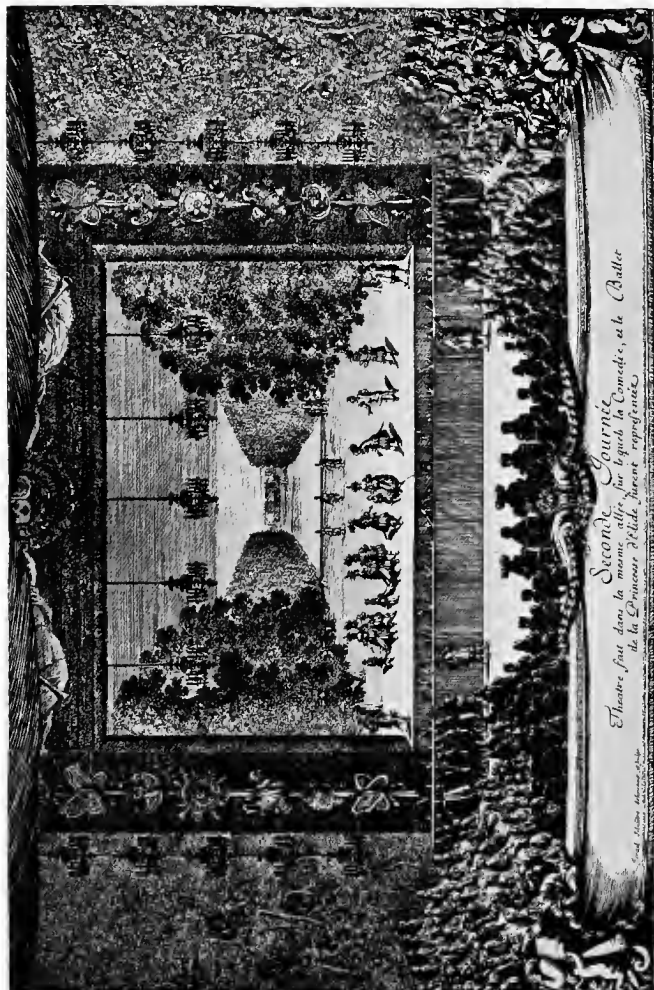
After meals Madame was handed a napkin, just as the King was, by some great personage. The napkin was moistened at one end, and she always speaks of the performance as "washing." Madame, like Monsieur, was always very punctilious about these ceremonies. Saint-Simon calls her "small in the extreme where it was a matter of exacting her due"; but it must be remembered that no one could possibly have been smaller in that respect than Saint-Simon himself.

At the wedding of her step-daughter, which took place at Fontainebleau in 1679, there was a question as to who

should carry Madame's train. It was more honorable, it seems, to have it carried by a lady than by a man, and the contention was that at the marriage of Charles IX the trains of his sisters had been carried in that way. The King consulted Sainctot, the master of ceremonies, who told him that there was some doubt about the matter. "But the King," writes Sainctot himself, "wishing to oblige Monsieur, told him that if a single case could be found where Dauphinesses had had their trains carried by ladies he would gladly accord the same honor to Madame. I alleged to him that at the wedding of Madame Claude de France in 1552 Madame de Brienne had carried the train of the Dauphiness. So the matter was decided as Monsieur desired."

During this same wedding ceremony the king at arms and the heralds had to summon Monsieur to take his place near the altar — by a bow or salutation; but they did this out of sight of the King. "Monsieur and Madame," writes Sainctot, "had claimed that the salute should be formal, or in other words from the same place from which the King was saluted. The King paid no heed to this pretension, which had already been formulated in vain at the creation of Knights of the Holy Spirit in 1662."

There were other fine points decided at this wedding. The King signed as *très haut, très puissant, et très excellent*, Monsieur was *très haut et très puissant*, the King's bastards



A PLAY IN THE OPEN AIR

trés hauts et puissants, and the foreign princes, as they were called [the Lorraines, etc.], merely *hauts et puissants*. When the moment came for signing, the *enfants de France* and the *petits enfants* had the pen handed them by great personages; but the princes of the blood had to take the pen themselves from the cornucopia. Two of them, the Prince of Condé and the Duc de Bourbon, had stayed away from the wedding because, they claimed, the pen should be handed to them — and by the same person, the secretary of state, whose duty it was to hand it to the King's granddaughters. When kneeling in chapel during the ceremony, Monsieur's second daughter as well as the *grande Mademoiselle* and her two sisters found themselves obliged to kneel on the King's *drap de pied* in such a way that their feet were entirely outside. But Saintot, writing for ages to come, declares, "That is the place where their feet ought to be, and that is what they had hitherto not at all observed."

The wedding procession itself must have been one of the most magnificent sights imaginable — especially to an age that had not yet been corrupted by the tawdry gorgeousness of the theatre. First came heralds, then Knights of the Holy Spirit in their velvet and ermine robes, then guards, drummers, trumpeters, and others, and then the King. Then came the Queen in a dress embroidered with gold and silver and a mantle of Spanish point lace, in length, as we have said, twenty-

seven feet and bordered with deep silver lace. . . . Mademoiselle, the bride, was clad *à la royale*. She wore on her head a crown of gold enriched with diamonds and closed by four quarter circles with the *fleurons* of Spain. Her mantle was of violet velvet lined with ermine three inches deep and with three rows of golden fleurs-de-lis. The train was eighteen feet long. Four dozen fleurs-de-lis were scattered about the extremity of the train. "But," says the master of ceremonies, "the King objected to these four dozen fleurs-de-lis and ordered me to remark in my registers that it had been done contrary to his intention."

Louis took everything concerning this Spanish wedding with the utmost seriousness. On the day following the ceremony he visited the new Queen and sat in an arm-chair between her and his own Queen. Suddenly, finding that it was late, he said: "Madame, you are the Catholic Queen and I am the most Christian King. I do not think we ought to miss the mass. We will go to chapel when you are ready."

At the marriage of Madame's second step-daughter, in 1684, — she married a Duke of Savoy and later became Queen of Sicily, — the court was in mourning for the French Queen, so the gown for the betrothal was of black cloth, but weighted down with pearls and diamonds. At the wedding itself she wore silver brocade with *boutonnieres* of diamonds; while the Duc du Maine, who stood

proxy for the husband, was in "breeches, doublet, and mantle of silk material covered with lace and enriched with diamonds."

Madame, like the King, received ambassadors. Her coach went to meet them on their arrival, and the officers of her household went to pay their respects. But the ambassador was not obliged to descend so many steps to greet them as he did in the case of the King's officers; nor, after seeing them to their coaches, was he obliged to wait until the coaches drove off.

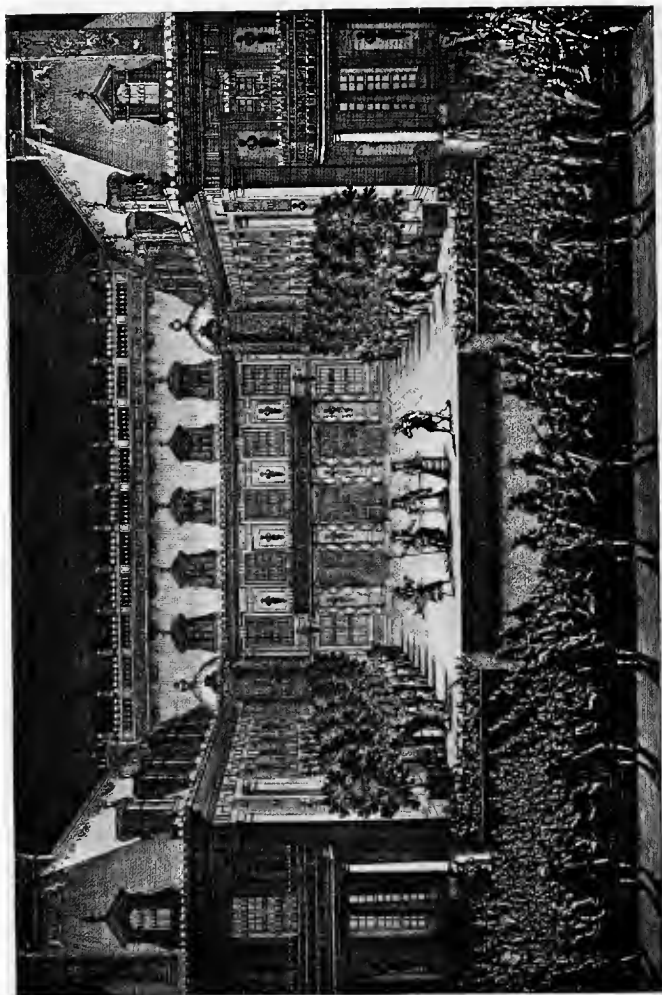
On the day of the audience Madame would await the ambassador in an arm-chair, with the duchesses sitting on *tabourets* around her, and her ladies standing. As the ambassador approached he made three low bows. Madame rose and remained standing throughout the audience. The ambassador had a right to keep his hat on in her presence, but it was a right which politeness forbade his using. On retiring he made three more bows and backed out the length of the room.

If it was merely an envoy and not an ambassador, Madame remained seated, making only a slight inclination of the head when he came and when he went. We have a speech that a Siamese ambassador made to Madame when having his farewell audience in 1686. It shows what an important person he, at least, considered her. "Very great Princess," he began, "our sojourn in France has caused us even to increase our original high esteem

for all the great qualities that are admired in you. It is no little consolation to us that our long journey to Europe and our return to Asia may be of service to your glory by giving us occasion to spread your name further and further, even to the remotest kingdoms. We shall announce everywhere in our own what we know of your greatness and of the striking merit that distinguishes you; and soon you shall hold the same place in the esteem of the King, our master, that you hold here in the mind and heart of Louis the Great."

One may consider this language exaggerated, but it did not so greatly differ from what Madame was accustomed to hear from those around her. Take, as an example, this letter from one of her ladies, the Marquise d'Alluye, who was lying on her death-bed: "I am dying, divine Princess. The fever that attacked me yesterday has so weakened me that Father Gaillard has ordered me to receive the last unction. Believe me, my Princess, so long as a moment of life wards off the misfortune of forever being deprived of your dear presence, it will console me for everything. At least grant me a moment in your precious recollections. If the dead feel anything, my joy will be perfect."

The doings of this Siamese embassy of 1686 are altogether interesting. It was a very pompous mission indeed. There were three ambassadors, eight mandarins, and twenty domestics. "The first act of the first am-



A PLAY IN THE MARBLE COURTYARD

bassador," writes Sainctot, in his account, "was to place the letter of his royal master at the bedside in the room of state in a machine which they call in their language *mordoc pratinan*, in ours the *lieu royal*. Each day all the ambassadors placed fresh flowers above the King's letter, and as often as they passed the *lieu royal*, they made profound bows. This mark of respect need not seem strange. In my youth [he is writing about 1730] all the old courtiers saluted the King's bed when they entered his chamber, and also the *nef*. Some of the ladies of the old court still courtesy to it." At the audience with the King the *machine du lieu royal* was brought to the palace and wheeled into the hall of guards. The first ambassador, Sainctot tells us, took from it a gold box in which the letter of the King of Siam was enclosed. He gave it to a mandarin to carry on a gold saucer, making him walk in front of him. Before the throne the mandarins prostrated themselves in the dust, and "they would have held their faces to the ground the whole time, had not the King given them permission to look at him. They had come too far, he said, not to permit him to see them."

When an ambassadress visited Madame, the latter's maid of honor went to the middle of the antechamber to meet her, kissed her, and taking her left hand, led her to Madame. The latter rose and remained standing near her arm-chair. The ambassadress and the maid of honor made courtesies; at the third one the ambassadress

bent down and kissed the hem of Madame's robe. The latter then kissed the ambassadress and offered her a *tabouret*.

This necessity of kissing the hem of the garment, which applied to all women presented to the Queen, the Dauphiness, or Madame, was one of those most often disputed. When Madame's Aunt Sophia visited the court, she was determined not to kiss the Queen's robe because it had not been required of her by the Empress. "The Queen turned towards me," she writes, "and . . . took her robe with her hand to present it to me. But I was not thirsting for it and contented myself with making her a deep courtesy. Monsieur, who had seen the Queen's gesture, laughed heartily, and remarked that she did the same to his children, and that the little Duc de Chartres had said: 'Do you think I kiss her robe? I kiss my own hand.'"

The reason for disregarding precedents established by the Empress is explained in the ceremonial: "It is said that the King of the Romans or Emperor is obliged in certain cases to answer to the Count Palatine, and that the Count may not exercise this jurisdiction save in a diet or imperial court at which the Emperor or King of the Romans is personally present. This article detracts from the dignity of the Emperor." In the same way Electors are looked down upon by the court of France because, by the Golden Bull: "Electors can be deposed and de-

prived of their fiefs and dignities in case they contravene the constitutions of the Empire. This article takes away a great deal from the sovereignty of the Electors."

When Madame passed through a double door, it was prescribed that both sides should be opened for her; also that, at Versailles, no lady should appear before her except in *grand habit*, which seems to have meant any dress with a train. She, in turn, unless in hunting costume, always appeared in *grand habit* before the King. When she danced at a ball, every one else had to rise. When she walked through the palace, she was preceded by torchbearers and followed by her ladies.

In Madame's presence no men but cardinals and princes (including, however, the King's legitimized sons) might sit. Women of rank might have a chair with a back or a stool, but never an arm-chair. Duchesses were given this privilege of sitting—the privilege of the *tabouret*, it was called—by brevet of the King. Chancellors' wives were in the unfortunate position of having the *tabouret* only in the morning. In the afternoon they had to stand.

Madame, as I said, insisted on her rights with the utmost vehemence. "There is not a single 'apartment,'" she writes in 1694, "at which I do not have to make people stand up who are sitting down in my presence, though they look me straight in the face. And the men are worse than the women. Here they do not know what

respect means — they know the word, but not the thing itself at all.”

But she had subterfuges for those whom she loved or specially wished to favor: when her half-brother came to visit her, unable to offer him either a chair or a stool, she piled the cushions against her dressing table and let him stay there until the small hours of the morning; and many a time to spare her lady visitors she made them pretend to play cards or do some fancy work where sitting was a necessity; or she met them in a nunnery where, out of respect for the sacredness of the place, she, as well as they, was obliged to stand.





LOUIS XIV TREADING ON HIS ENEMIES



CHAPTER IV

MADAME'S ASSOCIATES

It is time to speak more particularly of some of the chief personages with whom Madame came in contact. The Queen, Marie Thérèse, a Spanish infanta, was a perfect nonentity. Madame writes of her later: "Our Queen was excessively ignorant, but the kindest and most virtuous woman in the world. She had a certain greatness in her manner and knew how to hold court extremely well. She believed everything the King told her, good or bad. Her teeth were very ugly, being black and broken. This, it was said, came from her being in the habit of eating chocolate. She also frequently ate garlic. She was short and fat, and her skin was very white. When she was not walking or dancing, she seemed much taller. She ate frequently and took a long time; but her food was always cut in pieces small enough for a canary bird. She could not forget her country, and her manners were

always remarkably Spanish. She was very fond of cards, playing basset, reversi, ombre, and occasionally primero; but she never won, because she did not know how to play." It may be added in this connection that one evening after she had sacrificed 60,000 francs the King, who was always the soul of courtesy to her, could not refrain from asking how much, at that rate, her losses were going to amount to in the course of the year. Madame continues: "She had such an affection for the King that she used to watch his eyes to do whatever might be agreeable to him; if he merely looked kindly at her, she was happy for the rest of the day."

This description of the Queen corresponds with that given by Madame's aunt: "I found that she had an extraordinarily white skin, and that she was much finer looking near to than at a distance. For her figure was not good. Her back was too rounded, and her neck too short, which made her ungraceful. Her lips were bright red, but her teeth were all black and spoiled. It was always I who had to begin each topic of conversation. I began by praising the court of France and told her she could have had no trouble in accustoming herself to its ways. She responded no, that she had had no trouble at all, because she had been very happy there; and she said to me twice, 'The King loves me so; I am so grateful to him.' I answered very properly that that was not surprising, etc., and made her tell me how many



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THE QUEEN AS INFANTA

children she had had. . . . Towards evening I was led through a frightful crush, to see the grand ball. Because of my incognito I was placed behind the King and Queen, next to Madame de Pomponne. I thought I was witnessing the golden age, husband dancing with wife, brother with sister. But it was a matter of grandeur rather than of innocence, for each kept his rank, and they danced more from ceremony than from enjoyment. . . . The King made the best appearance, with which the good Queen, his wife, accorded very badly, making a very poor one. One would have said that when the King danced with her, he was ashamed of her."

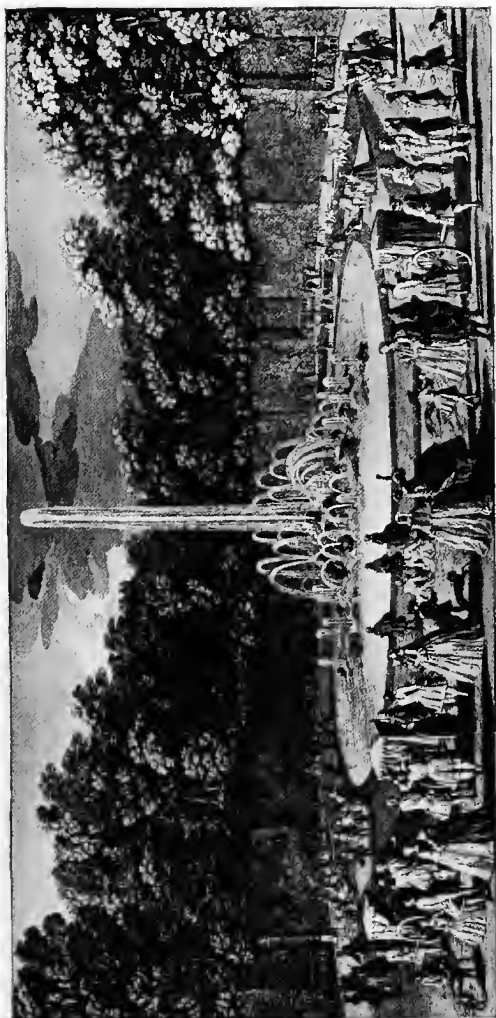
Madame has a passage about the Queen that is worth quoting: "When our Queen of blessed memory fell down, I ran right away. She wore very high shoes, fell often, and said each time: '*Ah, je suis tombée!*' I could never hear that without laughing and would run hastily into the other room."

The Queen died in 1683. Madame writes: "To be perfectly contented is dangerous to life. I remember that the Tuesday before the Queen's death the King gave her a fête at Versailles at a fountain called Enceladus. This Enceladus is entirely surrounded by foliage. There dinner was eaten and tables were set for playing, as in the 'apartments.' There were all kinds of music, a collation in the evening, and then we drove in open *calèches*. It was the finest weather in the world, for it

was the end of July. When the Queen returned to her room, she said to her favorite, Madame de Vizé, whom she called Philippa: 'Philippa, I never in my life had a more agreeable fête; for I may say that at all the other fêtes the King has given I have had grounds for grievance; but at this one I have had perfect contentment.' On Friday, at three in the afternoon, she was dead!"

The "grounds for grievance" were always Madame de la Vallière, Madame de Ludres, Madame de Montespan, Madame de Fontanges, or some other of the numerous favorites. Madame de la Vallière was still at court when Madame arrived. Not until 1674 did she renounce the world and bury herself alive in the strict order of the Carmelite nuns. But her glory had already departed, and she endured the humiliation of serving her successful rival, Madame de Montespan, as a sort of handmaid. Madame tells a terrible story of the King's cruelty to his former idol: "He used to pass through La Vallière's chamber to go to Montespan's," she writes; "and one day, at the instigation of the latter, he threw a little spaniel which he had named 'Malice' at the Duchesse de la Vallière, saying, 'There, Madame, is your companion; that's all.'"

Madame always considered Madame de la Vallière more sinned against than sinning, and formed a great friendship with her, going to visit her in the nunnery. Indeed, she was present at the taking of the veil and declares



AT THE FOUNTAIN OF ENCELADUS

that when it came to throwing the funeral pall over her, she, Madame, shed such bitter tears that she could see no more.

Although the soul of virtue herself, Madame had not the least objection to associating with women of the other kind. She writes late in life to her pious half-sister: "The way to associate with those who are so amusing but of light conduct is to believe nothing and only listen to their conversation. You need not fear catching their bad ways, especially at your age. That is the way I manage it, dear Louisa. I put up with all sorts of people. And it is certain, too, that much more evil is said of people than is really true."

Madame de Montespan was very different from Madame de la Vallière. Of her Madame writes: "She was the wickedest woman in the world. I know of three persons whom she poisoned: Fontanges, Fontanges' little son, and her maid, besides those I do not know about." And again, "She was a living devil in every way." With regard to this accusation against Madame de Montespan, it must be said that Madame was too prone to suspect poisonings. She believed that her predecessor, Henrietta of England, had been carried off in that way, although she attributed the crime not to Monsieur, but to his vile favorites, the Marquis d'Effiat and the Chevalier de Lorraine, the latter of whom had been exiled at the first Madame's instigation. On the other hand, the reve-

lations of De la Reynie, chief of police, whose papers are still preserved, compromise Madame de Montespan in the most astounding manner and convict her of dealings with noted sorcerers and poisoners whom she called in to give her love potions to enable her to retain the love of the King. In the company of these people she went through the obscene rites of the *messe noire*, and not only La Reynie, but reputable modern historians, who have found corroborative evidence, believe that she finally tried to poison the King.

In the time of the Montespan's glory the King's infatuation knew no bounds. For her he gave the most sumptuous fêtes, he showered gold upon her, and he presented her with a domain at Clagny, where she erected a superb palace, reminding Madame de Sévigné of Dido building Carthage or of Armide in the midst of her enchantments. She bore the King seven children, who were legitimatized and given rank next to the princes, but who were always Madame's abominations. Louis' poor Queen would appeal to Madame de Montespan for favors, would humbly present herself at Clagny to ask after the health of the children, and would take the mother driving when she seemed in need of distraction. Madame de Montespan had a husband living who objected very much to what Molière called the *partage avec Jupiter*.

Madame de Maintenon, the governess of Madame de Montespan's children and her eventual supplanter in the



MADAME DE MONTESPAN

King's favor, was another aversion of Madame's. The latter's hatred was implacable, was horrible. It has been ascribed to pure jealousy, but that explanation is only partial. The two women were antipodes in every phase of their characters: the one cold, calculating, and intriguing and bigoted to the last degree; the other impulsive, warm-hearted, outspoken, and thoroughly tolerant in religious matters. Madame had enormous pride of birth; she looked upon Madame de Maintenon as an upstart. "How should the Rumpumpel have learned to live with people of my kind?" she writes. "She has passed her life with people of another kind." And again: "The passion the husband has for this woman [Louis had married her secretly in 1684] is something unheard of. All Paris says that as soon as peace is concluded [this was in 1696] the marriage will be declared and the lady take her rank. That, too, makes me glad no longer to be first lady, for at least I will follow something respectable, and not be obliged to hand the lady her *chemise* and gloves." The marriage, of course, was a *mésalliance*, and *mésalliances* were Madame's *bêtes noires*. "If one marries *canaille*," she once wrote, "one has to associate with one's brother-in-law, and unconsciously assumes his base sentiments."

Madame's chief grievance was the religious influence — which no one disputes — that Madame de Maintenon exercised over the King. "Your Grace cannot possibly

imagine," she writes, "what a simple belief the great man has, just like children's nurses. It makes one feel badly to hear him speak of it. . . . Before the great man gave himself over to the 'devout' he never in his life hated his neighbor as he does now." Again she writes: "She makes the King cruel, which his Majesty is not by nature; . . . she makes him hard and tyrannical with no more compassion for anything. . . . The old hag and the Jesuits had persuaded him that if he tormented the Protestants, he would atone before God and man for the scandal he had caused through the double adultery with the Montespan." To her dying day Madame believed that the terrible misfortunes which fell upon France were due to the persecutions that culminated in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. In the awful year of 1709 she writes: "All honest people saw very well what would come of expelling the Protestants, but too much belief was put in priests and old women. That is why, at this present moment, everything here is so happy and prosperous!"

There was no evil of which Madame did not think Madame de Maintenon capable. "There is a rumor that the Pantocrate is betraying her husband," she writes in 1701, "and that she takes money from the Emperor; that would be too good for anything if it were true . . . she takes money from all sides here." Again: "They say, and I believe, that every evening Madame de Maintenon receives five or six packets from the court spies



MADAME DE MAINTENON

in which they give an account of all that goes on at court." Once we have this malicious hit: "To show your Grace that I was right in thinking that Jupiter would be having Alcmenes if they let him, and did not frighten him with Pluto, I must tell you that there was a very pretty woman here, a cousin of the Maréchale de la Motte, named Madame de la Bossière. She stayed several days and then returned to Paris. Then our Jupiter asked, 'Where is Madame de la Bossière?' They answered, 'She has gone back to Paris.' He responded, 'I am very glad of it, for when I see her I cannot help fixing my eyes on her the whole time.' So you see I was right."

Madame's language about Madame de Maintenon could, for the most part, not be reproduced in polite society. Here, however, are some mild specimens: "She cannot do more harm than she has already done; and I hope she will go to hell for it, and may God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost conduct her there! . . . I do not believe that a wickeder devil can be found in the world than she is, with all her devoutness and hypocrisy. I find that she illustrates the old German proverb, 'Where the devil cannot go himself he sends an old woman.'"

In 1690 Madame writes: "Though they try to vex me in every way, and the villainy and wicked offices of old witches cause me to be very badly treated by the King, I have quickly taken my determination, and in order to drive them wild, I take great care of my health. The old

woman is at least fifteen or twenty years older than I, therefore I imagine that if I have patience and look after my health, I shall enjoy the consolation of seeing her go before me into the other world." Again in 1692: "Though I am no longer young the old — is older than I, so I hope for the pleasure, before my end, of seeing the old devil go to pieces." In 1695 she writes that Monsieur has brought her news which is almost too good to be true: "It is, namely, that the old — is said to have a cancer." She imagines Madame de Maintenon is merely pretending, however, so as to hold her husband the faster.

In 1700 we have this: "I had to laugh heartily at your Grace's remark that the King was not prevented by his old shadow from being in a good humor. The influence of this shadow is indeed great, and since the King has the sun for his emblem, one may well call the old woman an eclipse, for she darkens this sun here more than the real one was darkened last year. The spots of the real eclipse disappear in a few hours, but these spots will last as long as the old woman lives." In 1710 she writes: "The King is more charmed than ever with his old lady-love . . . everything goes like the old lady's figure, namely, crooked and criss-cross."

One who shared in the hatred of Madame de Maintenon was the Dauphiness, a Bavarian princess who was a relative of Madame's. The wedding had taken place in 1680, much to the chagrin of Madame's Aunt Sophia, whose



THE DAUPHIN

chief object in coming to France in 1679 had been to show her own daughter to the Dauphin. The Dauphiness was not beautiful, but the King's special emissary to Bavaria had reported that if his Majesty "would beware of his first impressions, he would eventually be quite content." Madame drove to Chalons for the wedding and had an experience there that made her wonder later if marriages that begin with laughter are always the happiest: "We were all together on a raised estrade," she writes, "and the Cardinal de Bouillon was about to perform the service a few steps below us. The *grande Mademoiselle's* foot slipped; I saw her coming and, being thin and light, jumped down four steps at once and thus escaped the shock. Instead the *grande Mademoiselle* fell on the cardinal, and the cardinal on the Dauphin and Dauphiness. They too would have fallen had not the King stretched out his arm and held them all. They fell just like cards." The Dauphiness's life was an unhappy one, and she was ill a great part of the time. She bore the Dauphin three children, all of whom we shall meet again later: the Duc de Bourgogne, the Duc d'Anjou, and the Duc de Berry.

Madame writes in 1690: "The poor Dauphiness is again very bad; they are killing her through sadness. They are trying their best to do the same for me, but I am a harder nut than the Dauphiness, and before the old women eat me up they are likely to lose a few teeth."

For the Dauphin Madame had no great affection: his

character seems to have been somewhat colorless. "Nothing in the world can make him either glad or sad," Madame writes; ". . . he hates no one and loves nothing." In some respects he seems never to have developed. Madame writes: "I cannot bear to have any one touch me from behind; it makes me beside myself with anger. I very nearly hit the Dauphin one day, for he had a wicked trick of stealing up and putting his clenched fist in the chair just as I was about to sit down. I begged him for God's sake to leave off this habit, and he did finally leave me alone."

These grand personages of Versailles unbent strangely at times. Once the King suggested to his daughters to fire off little bombs in front of Monsieur's window and rouse him from his slumbers. Instead they lighted a fire and the smoke drove him from his room. Madame writes: "It was four o'clock in the morning before he could go back, and his agitated night gave him a horrible headache and made him very angry. The King, when he saw that his daughters had exceeded his commands and his intentions, begged Monsieur's pardon for himself and for the princesses. The one who really suffered most by it was Madame du Maine, for Monsieur, as he passed through her room, poured a glass of water into her bed, so that she had first to dry her sheets and was unable finally to get to bed any earlier than Monsieur himself. Monsieur spoke very nicely about it afterwards, and said

he would like to be of an age when pages' jokes amused him, but that such, unfortunately, was not the case."

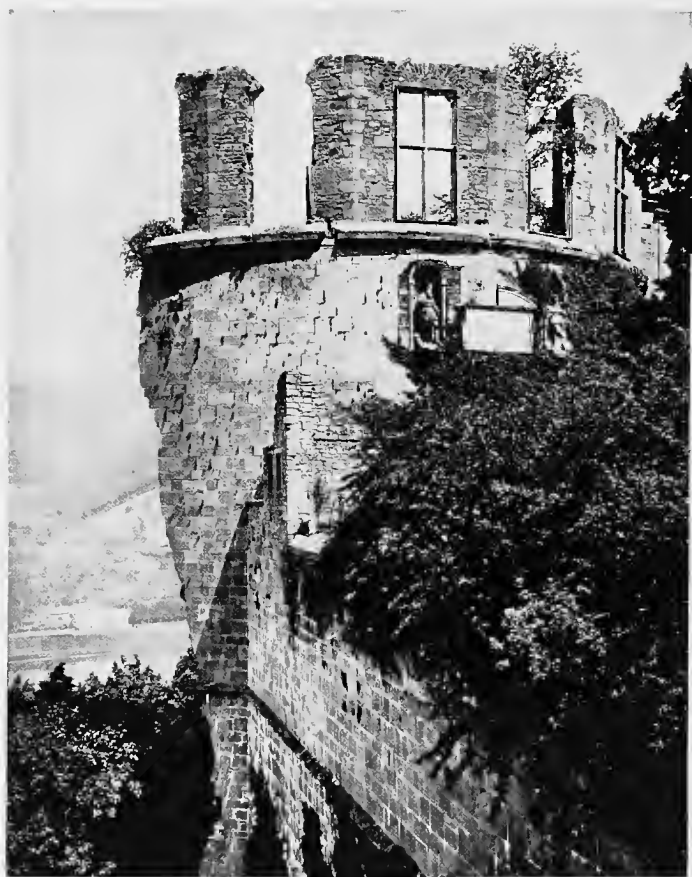
Saint-Simon sums up the character of the Dauphin in much the same terms as Madame: "A hunter without pleasure; inclined to be voluptuous but without taste; once a player for high stakes, but, — since he took to building, — whistling, and tapping his snuff-box with his fingers in the corner of the *salon* at Marly; opening his large eyes on this person and that, almost without looking at them; without conversation, without amusement, I might almost say without feeling or thinking." He speaks of him as an "indefinable prince."

* * * * *

All had gone moderately well with Madame for the first ten years of her stay in France. She had borne her husband three children, the Duc de Valois, the Duc de Chartres (the future Regent), and the young Elizabeth Charlotte. The Duc de Valois died at the age of three, and forty years later Madame writes: "I wept for my son for six whole months. I thought I should go mad. No one knows that pain who has not lost a child. It is as though some one were tearing the very heart out of one's body. I shudder at it still." But after ten years there came terrible times with Monsieur. He really was the scum of the earth, a man of horrible vices who squandered his own and Madame's money on the vilest

favorites — among them the very men who were believed to have poisoned his first wife. “If it was only that Monsieur lost his money in gambling,” Madame writes, “it would not be so bad; but that he gives it away by the hundreds of thousands of francs and then tries to economize it on his children and me is not pleasant at all.” And again, — this after Monsieur’s death, — “They find that three young fellows alone received a hundred thousand thalers a year each.” “There is no use expostulating with him,” she once wrote; “he says openly that he is growing old and has no time to lose. By hook or by crook he means to be merry to the end. Those who outlive him, he says, must shift for themselves, that he loves himself more than wife or children.”

Madame nearly fell a victim to an odious intrigue woven against her by her husband’s favorites, who saw in her a bar to his liberalities. They made her husband believe, and tried to convince the King, that she had a *liaison* with one of the courtiers. There were a number of persons in the plot, and it ended in Monsieur talking of divorce and dismissing her favorite attendants, and in Madame going and begging the King to permit her to end her days in a convent. One remark she was said to have made — that they were trying to poison her as they had poisoned the late Madame — added oil to the flames; but with the King’s help her enemies were finally brought to their knees.



HEIDELBERG CASTLE IN RUINS

But Madame's life, from now on, became almost unbearable, because the King, too, began to turn against her — largely, she believed, through the influence of Madame de Maintenon. "The King is so changed in everything that I no longer know him," she writes in 1685, "though I know perfectly well whence it all comes. But there is nothing to be done." Louis finally struck Madame a most terrible blow by his treatment of her adored country, the Palatinate. Under pretext of claiming it as her inheritance after her brother's death he laid it waste with fire and sword. Madame writes in September, 1688: "Our Dauphin has now become a warrior and left yesterday for the army in order to besiege and take Philipsburg. He told me that after Philipsburg he wished to take Mannheim and Frankenthal and carry on the war in my interests. But I answered him, 'If you take my advice, you will not go, for I confess I can only have sorrow and no joy at seeing my name made use of to ruin my poor country,' and thus we bade each other farewell."

By the orders of Louvois, Louis' minister, Heidelberg castle, where Madame had passed the happiest days of her life, was deliberately blown up with gunpowder; nothing remained intact in it but the great wine-cask, even then so famous that to drink from it the Dauphin made a special expedition.

"What pains me most," Madame writes, "is that they used my name to plunge the poor people into the most utter

despair. Though they kill me for it, I cannot help bewailing that I am, so to speak, the ruin of my fatherland." And she tells in wonderfully graphic language how she cannot shut out the dreadful vision of her ancestral castle in ruins, how it brings back the memory of what it was in her time and what it is now,—yes, and what she herself has become and how she has failed in the very object for which she allowed herself to be sold, as it were, to France. "When all the misfortunes came about," she wrote later, "I was for more than six months in such a state that the moment I closed my eyes to try to sleep I saw the places in flames, I sprang up with horror and wept until I choked." At Versailles they seem to have been impatient of her grief and to have practically forced her to play her part as before in the ceremonies and fêtes.

She writes in 1689: "Yesterday they told me something that touched me very much, and I could not listen to it without tears, namely, that the poor people in Mannheim had all gone back and sought refuge in their cellars, and that they live there as if they were in houses — yes, that they even hold the market daily, as though the town were in its former condition; and that if a Frenchman comes to Heidelberg the poor people crowd round him and ask after me."

She had once written: "It seems to me we Palatines have this about us, that we love our country unto death and nothing goes ahead of it. In that respect we are

like the Israelites." Yet she never wishes to go back: "I wish Heidelberg happiness, blessings, and all that is good," she writes in 1714; "but it would kill me to see it again now." And again, near the end of her life: "I have a horror of nothing so much as of a ruined castle . . . all my life I have had a horror of them. . . . I shudder when I think of all that Monsieur de Louvois burned. I imagine he is burning finely for it in the other world. . . . He was horribly cruel, had no pity for anything."

* * * * *

A new element came into Madame's life, and indeed into that of the whole court with the advent of the fugitive King James, of his wife, Mary of Modena, and of their little son. William of Orange landed in England on November 5, 1688, and on February 13, 1689, the crown was granted to him by act of Parliament, James and his wife having meanwhile been allowed to escape. Louis XIV was attending mass when a chamberlain stepped up and whispered something in his ear. He cried aloud, "The King of England has arrived in France; he is at Boulogne!" This news was so different to that which had been expected, namely, that King James had been killed in battle, that an immense joy seized on all. Madame's letters for this period are unfortunately lost, but Madame de Sévigné gives interesting details of the arrival. It

must be remembered that the Queen and her son preceded the King by a day. Madame de Sévigné writes on January 10: "Our King acts in a manner almost divine with regard to their Britannic majesties; for is it not being the representative of the Almighty, to support a King banished, betrayed, and abandoned? The noble ambition of our sovereign is gratified by acting this part; he went to meet the Queen with all his household and a hundred coaches and six. When he perceived the Prince of Wales' carriage, he alighted and would not let this little child, who is beautiful as an angel, they say, dismount. He affectionately embraced him. He then ran to the Queen, who was by this time alighted; he saluted her, talked with her for some time, placed her at his right hand in his carriage, presented to her the Dauphin and Monsieur, who were also in the carriage, and conducted her to St. Germain, where she found everything prepared for her like a queen, all sorts of apparel and a rich casket containing six thousand louis d'ors. The King of England was expected the next day at St. Germain, where the King awaited him. He arrived late because he came from Versailles. His Majesty went to the end of the guard-room to meet him; the King of England made an inclination, as if to embrace his knees, but the King prevented him and embraced him three or four times very cordially. They talked together in a low voice for nearly a quarter of an hour. The King presented to him the Dauphin



KING JAMES II

and Monsieur, the princes of the blood and the Cardinal de Bonzi. He conducted him to the apartment of the Queen, who could scarcely refrain from tears. After conversing for a few minutes his Majesty led them to the apartment of the Prince of Wales, where they again conversed for some time, and he then withdrew, not choosing to be attended back, but saying to the King: 'This is your house; when I come, you will do the honours of it, and I will do the honours of mine when you come to Versailles.' The next day, which was yesterday, the Dauphiness went there with all the court. I do not know how they will have managed about chairs for the princesses. They had them at the wedding of the Queen of Spain, and the Queen-mother of England was treated as a *fille de France*. . . . His Majesty sent the King of England ten thousand louis d'ors. The latter looks old and worn. The Queen is thin, with fine black eyes swollen from weeping; a fine complexion but rather pale; a large mouth, beautiful teeth, a fine figure and a good share of sense. No wonder that with all these advantages she pleases every one."

Two days later Madame de Sévigné writes again: "It is so extraordinary to have this court here that it is the constant subject of conversation. The regulation of rank and precedence is to be attended to, so as to make life pleasant for those who are so little likely to be restored. The King said this the other day, adding that the English King was the best man in the world, that he should hunt

with him, that he should come to Marly and Trianon, and that the courtiers should accustom themselves to him."

It is interesting to see to what questions of etiquette this appearance of a new King at court, and a King whose susceptibilities it was desired to spare in every way, gave rise. "The King of England does not give his hand to the Dauphin," writes Madame de Sévigné, "and does not reconduct him." And again: "The Queen has not kissed Monsieur, who is offended at this. She said to the King: 'Tell me what you wish me to do; if you would have me follow the French fashion, I will kiss whom you please; but it is not the custom in England to kiss any one.'"

The excitement ran all through the royal family, each trying to adjust himself to the new situation. "The Dauphiness does not intend to visit this Queen," writes Madame de Sévigné; "she wants her right-hand seat and chair of state, which cannot be; she will, therefore, always be in bed when the Queen visits her." The princesses of the blood objected to taking seats without a back in the Queen's presence, but this was arranged by having the princesses make their visits simultaneously with Madame. "Madame is to have an arm-chair upon the left hand," writes Madame de Sévigné, "and the princesses of the blood are to visit with her; before her they have *tabourets* only. The duchesses will be on the

same footing as when in the Dauphiness's presence; this is settled. The King, having learned that a King of France gave a Prince of Wales merely a chair on the left hand, chooses that the King of England should treat the Dauphin in the same manner and take precedence over him. He is to receive Monsieur without chair or ceremony. The Queen has kissed him after saying what I told you to our sovereign."

On January 17 we have this from Madame de Sévigné: "The English court is quite established at St. Germain. They would not accept more than 15,000 *livres* a month, and have regulated their court upon that basis. The Queen is very much liked; our King converses very pleasantly with her; she has good sense without affectation. The King wished the Dauphiness to pay her the first visit, but the Dauphiness was always so conveniently indisposed that this Queen paid her a visit three days ago, admirably dressed; a black velvet robe, a beautiful petticoat, her hair tastefully disposed, a figure like the Princess de Conti's, and great dignity of manner. The King received her as she alighted; she went first into his apartment where she had a chair lower than the King's. Here she remained for half an hour; he then conducted her to the Dauphiness, who was up and about. This occasioned a little surprise. The Queen said to her, 'I expected, Madame, to have found you in bed.' 'I wished to rise, Madame,' replied

the Dauphiness, 'to receive the honor your Majesty does me.' The King then left them, as the Dauphiness has no chair in his presence. The Queen took her seat with the Dauphiness on her right hand and Madame on her left, and there were three other chairs for the young princes. They conversed together for upwards of half an hour. Several duchesses were present, and the court was very numerous. At length she retired; the King had given orders to be informed of it, and handed her back to her carriage. I do not know how far the Dauphiness went with her, but I shall hear. The King, on his return, highly praised the Queen, saying: 'This is how a queen ought to be, both in person and mind, holding her court with dignity. . . .' Some of our ladies, who tried to assume the airs of princesses, did not kiss the Queen's robe; some of the duchesses tried to avoid it too. But the King was displeased at this, and now they pay her homage."

Our Madame writes of the Queen in 1690; "To tell the truth she is horribly proud and arrogant, which has not helped her in gaining the favor of the ladies here. She was long unwilling to make courtesies to any one; now she makes little bobs which do not yet suit our ladies."

Later, indeed, Madame became quite devoted to the Queen, and, writing long afterwards, describes her as follows: "The Queen was not pretty, but very agreeable.



THE DAUPHIN, DAUPHINESS, AND THREE SONS

She was exceptionally tall—as tall as our late King—and very thin, though more so in the body than in the face. The face was rather long, but rather round, too. She had intelligence in her eyes, which were not ugly, either. She had a straight nose and quite a large mouth, with large white teeth which remained white to the end. Her face was a little sallow, more noticeably so after her Majesty had left off rouging. She had a good bearing and walked well, being very proper in everything.”

Madame’s feelings towards King James, too, varied at different times. The first verdict that we have is: “When one sees the good King and speaks to him, one feels, indeed, very sorry for him; he seems to be goodness itself. But one cannot be surprised that what we now witness should have happened to him. . . . If one wishes to distinguish the two Kings, one can say that the Prince of Orange is ‘King *in* England,’ while ours is ‘King *out of* England.’” Later she tells ridiculous anecdotes about James and concludes: “I am sorry for him, yet I cannot help laughing when I see him so silly. He is glad to be here and is always laughing.”

In February, 1689, James set out to regain his kingdom, and Louis XIV, who had given him a whole army with its accoutrements and millions of money, said to him at parting: “Sir, it is with grief I see you depart, yet I never wish to see you again. But should you return, be assured you will find me the same as you

leave me." After the failure of the expedition and James' return, Madame considers him callous, far too easily amused with trifles and too much absorbed in bishops and monks. She thinks, too, that if he were not so entirely under the eye of the Queen, he might behave less respectably. "I imagine this good Queen would be happy to have her lord never see any ladies handsomer than myself," she writes.

Soon after, in October, 1690, we have this: "Madame de Portsmouth, whom we had here a few days ago, told me the late King [Charles] used to say: 'You will see that when my brother is King, he will lose his kingdom through zeal for religion and his soul through ugly women, for he has not good taste enough to love pretty ones. . . .' If his going to Rome would give us a good peace, I wish he would soon betake himself there, for I am very tired of war. The more one sees this King and the more one hears of the Prince of Orange, the more one excuses the Prince and sees that he is worthy of esteem. . . . Certainly an intelligence like his pleases me better than a handsome face."

Madame sends comic songs to her aunt on the subject of King James, and is glad they have diverted her Grace. The songs, she declares, do not hurt him in France, and he is more in favor than one would imagine. "They make songs here about everything, and no one can escape them — not even our King himself, or his minister . . .

every one says his opinion of them all either in prose or in verse. So the King of England must not take it ill."

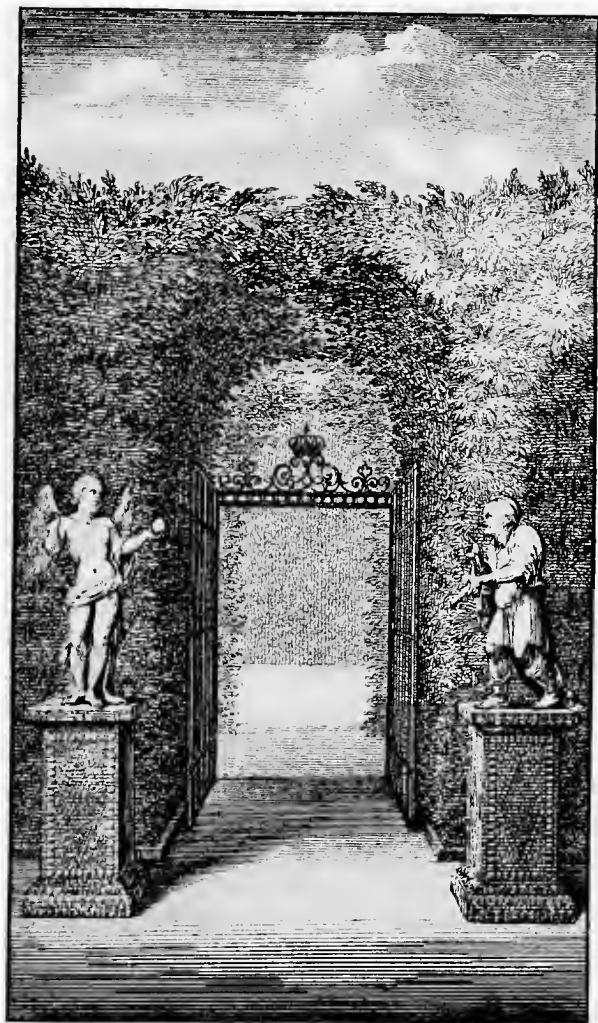
As she grows to know King James better, she changes her opinion of him: "Now that I have come to know good King James better, I have grown quite fond of him. He is the best man in the world. I pity him from the bottom of my heart, for he sighs sometimes so unhappily. He took me aside and questioned me closely as to whether it was true that his daughter, the Princess of Orange, had been so sad over his misfortunes that she had not wished to dance when her Grace the Electress of Brandenburg was in The Hague, and whether it was true that she had written to your Grace that she was glad he had not been killed in Ireland. I assured him it was true, and it seemed to me that this assurance gave the poor unhappy King a little consolation."

What she criticises most in King James is his devoutness. She would like to see him back upon his throne, but declares that the *pai pai*, the *mai mai* (so she mimics the intoning of the priests), and all the monkishness is more his affair than reigning: "I wish he could come to a good arrangement with the Prince of Orange, so that he could do the praying for the prince, and the latter do the reigning for his father-in-law; then there might be peace all round."

After the failure of the expedition of 1692, Madame pities King James still more. The latter's letter to

Louis declaring that he could not endure the thought of having brought disgrace on the King's arms and begging him to abandon him, brought tears to her eyes. But she thinks that James is the simplest man she ever saw, and that a child of seven would not have made such mistakes. She wishes he would become a pilgrim, go to Rome, and see as many Jesuits and monks as possible, leaving William in possession, and she thinks it would be a fine combination if William, who is childless, would adopt James' children.





THE ENTRANCE TO THE LABYRINTH



CHAPTER V

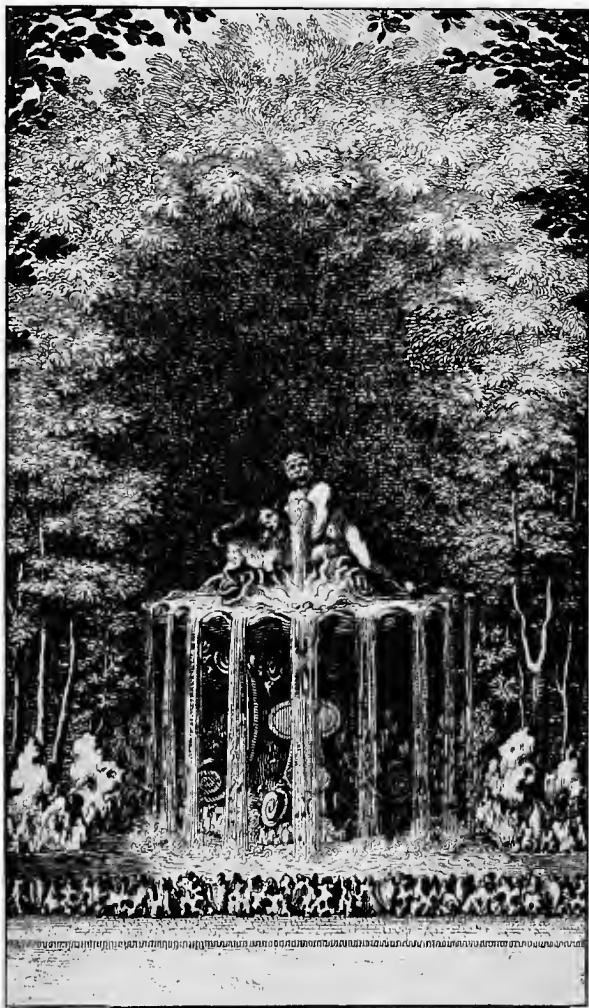
THE KING'S GRANDSONS AND THE STUARTS

THE Dauphiness died in 1690, and Madame writes that she has wept herself almost blind, "for I loved her Grace very much; moreover, when I saw our arms everywhere on the coffin and on the black hangings in the church, it so recalled to me the deaths of his Grace the Elector, of my mother, and of my brother that I nearly burst with weeping."

She is aghast at the callousness of the rest of the court, and she places Louis before us in a new light: "Wednesday, after this dreadful ceremony, we went to Marly; there my sadness might have left me, for life went on exactly as usual; all the rooms full of card players, in the afternoon the hunting, in the evening the music . . . would God your Grace could be as hard-hearted and love your own as little as the great man his son

and his brother. For they grieve over nothing, die who will. . . . If they did it from strength of character, one might praise and admire them; but such is not the case. With the spectacle before their eyes they are full of lamentations; but the moment they are out of the room they laugh and never think of it again." Years later Saint-Simon tells us in this connection that on the day after Monsieur's death the King sang prologues of operas and asked the Duchesse de Bourgogne what could make her so melancholy; while the Duc de Bourgogne asked the Duc de Montfort to play at "Brelan." "'Brelan!' you can't be thinking of it," cried Montfort; "Monsieur is still warm!"

Madame had one trial at this time which she often designated as the bitterest in her life. Already in 1688 she had written to her aunt these lines: "I could not neglect this good and safe opportunity of pouring out my whole heart to your Grace and telling you all my torments, which I cannot confide to the ordinary post. I must, then, confess to my dearest aunt that for some time I have been far, far from happy, though I let it be noticed just as little as possible. The real reason has been confided to me why the King treats the Chevalier de Lorraine and the Marquis d'Effiat so well. It is because they have promised to persuade Monsieur to humbly beg the King to marry the Montespan's children to mine — namely, my daughter to the



A FOUNTAIN (The Monkey and the Chestnuts)

lame Duc du Maine, and my son to Mademoiselle de Blois. In this case the Maintenon is entirely for the Montespan, because it was she who brought these bastards up, and she loves the lame boy like her own child. Now think, your Grace, what my feelings must be at seeing my daughter alone so badly provided for, although her sisters are so well married. Even were not the Duc du Maine the child of a double adultery, but a rightful prince, I should not want him for a son-in-law nor his sister for a daughter-in-law. He is horribly ugly and lame, and has other bad qualities of his own, is stingy as the devil, and has not a good disposition. His sister, indeed, has a good disposition, but is dreadfully delicate, and so blear-eyed that I believe she will finally go blind. But over and above all this they are, as I said before, bastards from a double adultery and children of the wickedest and most desperate woman on the face of the earth. Now I leave it to your Grace to imagine how pleasing this is to me. The worst thing is that I cannot speak out plainly to Monsieur about the matter, for he has the pretty habit, when I speak a word to him, of immediately repeating it, with amplifications, to the King and getting me into a hundred difficulties with the latter. I am therefore in dire need, and do not know where to turn to avoid this calamity. Meanwhile I cannot help torturing myself inwardly, and every time I see these bastards my blood wells up. My dearly

loved aunt may well imagine how it must pain me to see my only son and my only daughter the victims of my worst enemies, who daily inflict and have inflicted on me every kind of evil — yes, even trying to smirch my honor through their false speeches. They say that D'Effiat has the promise of a dukedom, and that the Chevalier is to have a large sum of money. . . . I shall probably be exiled on account of this, for if Monsieur speaks to me seriously about it, I shall not fail to tell him what I think. He will, then, as usual, retail it to the King."

What Madame had so dreaded came to pass, at least in part, in 1692. Monsieur came to her one day, told her that a marriage had been arranged between their son and Mademoiselle de Blois, and hoped that she, Madame, would "not be so base" as to oppose it. It was the wish of the boy himself, and the King was ready to make brilliant provision for the pair.

Madame was frantic. But she did not dare to openly oppose such a powerful combination, and in a conference held in the King's cabinet told him and Monsieur that when they spoke to her *en maître* she felt bound to obey. Saint-Simon relates that after this interview, he saw Madame raging like a lioness; that she stalked along the *Galerie des glaces* handkerchief in hand, weeping and gesticulating wildly and looking for all the world like Ceres demanding Proserpine back from Jupiter. He



ONE OF THE GRAND APARTMENTS

further relates that as her son bent to kiss her hand she drew it back and gave him a resounding whack on the ear; also that when, after supper that night, she and the King exchanged the customary bows, hers was a mere pirouette and that the King as he raised his head found himself staring at her retreating back.

Madame begged her aunt not to believe the stories of her acting childishly in regard to the marriage. But she made no secret of her horror of this match. When she learns that the Duc du Maine has taken a Bourbon princess, she writes that a stone has fallen from her heart. But in 1695, she writes: "Should all the present caresses be for the purpose of handing over my daughter to *Stinknase* [the Comte de Toulouse], I will never in my life do it." And nearly a whole year later she expresses the fear that *Stinknase* still has "our girl" in view.

One cannot wonder that Madame was unpopular with the people of the court, for her bluntness and outspokenness were something phenomenal, as one may judge from a little episode that occurred in January, 1696. Madame at the time was forty-four years old. A Chevalier de Bouillon had been boasting that she was in love with him. "Last Monday when I came to the play," she writes, "I saw some young people look at me, laugh scornfully, and make signs to the Chevalier. That roused my blood. We had been talking of apostrophizing.

'There's one man I mean to apostrophize soon,' I said out loud before the Dauphin. 'Who?' he asked. 'Chevalier de Bouillon,' I replied; 'I hear he boasts of my having an intense passion for him about which I myself know nothing. I should like to know by what great and beautiful qualities he has so charmed me; and if he continues to talk as if he were so fascinating, I shall have to beg the King to remove this torch that burns my heart to ashes.'" She said it laughingly, so she tells us, but the Dauphin took the matter up and the Chevalier's father came to see her. She writes: "'What,' said Monsieur de Bouillon, 'could make you think my son capable of such impertinence?' 'There are two reasons,' I answered, 'one is his insolence to the Duchess of Hanover . . . the other that he is a drunkard. I saw him so drunk at Fontainebleau that in my presence, at the hunt, he called you an old fool.' . . . There are terrible disputes at court over this matter. More than half think I did perfectly right to give the young people a scare; others think I might have done it in a quieter way, and less publicly."

In this same year, 1696, Madame lost her position as first lady in France, for the Duc de Bourgogne, the King's eldest grandson, contracted to marry a Savoy princess. The little bride came to France as a hostage, but with the contract of marriage already drawn up. She was the step-granddaughter of Madame. To make sure



THE DUCHESS OF BURGUNDY

that she was no smaller and no less beautiful than had been represented, her portrait, together with a ribbon indicating her height and one of her corsages to indicate her girth, had been sent ahead and approved. A crowd of some twenty thousand gathered at the frontier, near the Pont de Beauvoisin, to greet her, the King having sent a cortège of no less than six hundred persons. The exigencies of etiquette marred the joy of her arrival. Her escort insisted that the French should come to the Savoy end of the bridge and get her, the French that the Savoyards should bring her over. After many hours of delay and irritation the plan was adopted of placing a coach in the middle of the bridge, with the hind wheels in Savoy, the front in France. The two escorts drew up each on its own side of the dividing line. The transfer was then effected, and a written receipt given for the little princess, as though she had been a bale of merchandise.

We have several portraits of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and Madame's verbal description is as vivid as any portrait. "I must tell your Grace," she writes, "a little about the future Duchesse de Bourgogne, who finally arrived at Fontainebleau last Monday. The King, Monsieur, and my son received her on Monday at Montargis. I awaited her in her apartment at Fontainebleau. I received her laughing, for I thought I should laugh myself ill. There was such a crowd and crush that

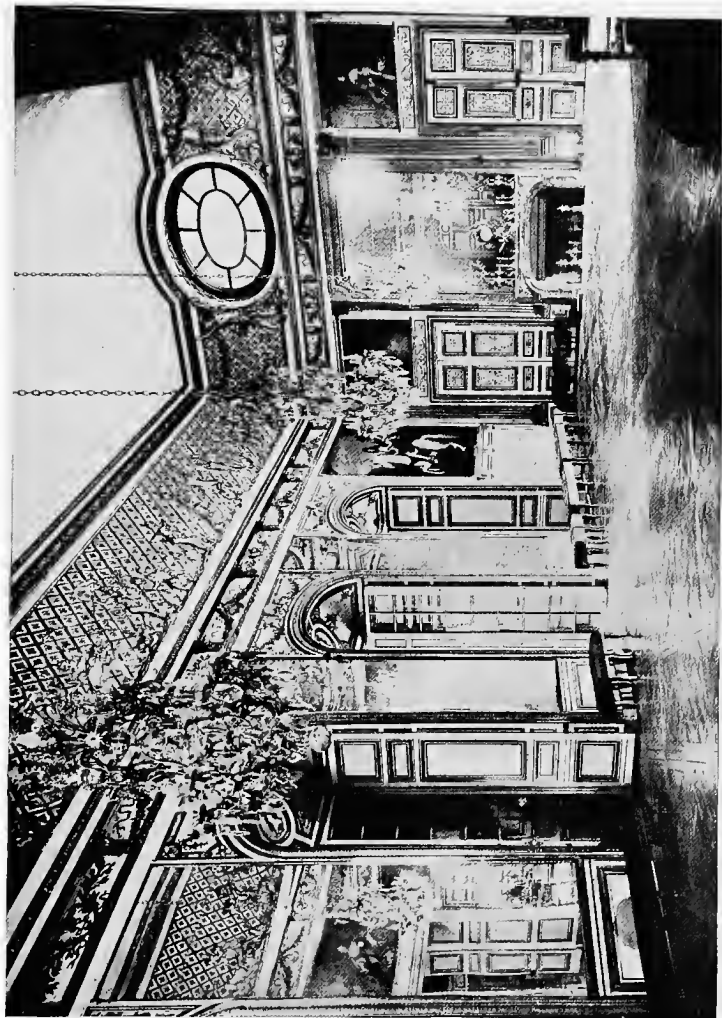
they pushed poor Madame de Nemours and the Maré-chale de la Motte so that both came towards us back-wards the whole length of the room, and finally fell on Madame de Maintenon. Had I not held the latter by the arm, they would have knocked each other down like cards; it was too comical. . . . As to the princess," Madame continues, "her Grace is not very tall for her age, but has a nice slim figure like a perfect doll. She has fine blonde hair and in great quantities, black eyes and eyebrows and very long and beautiful eyelashes; her skin is very smooth, but not so very white; the little nose neither pretty nor ugly; a large mouth and thick lips—in short, quite an Austrian mouth and chin. She walks well, has a good bearing, and is graceful in everything she does. She is very serious for a child of her age [she is eleven], and frightfully politic. She pays little attention to her grandfather and hardly looks at my son or me; but the moment she sees Madame de Maintenon she smiles at her and goes to her with open arms. . . . We are all children once more. Day before yesterday . . . we played blind-man's-buff; yesterday we played 'how do you like the company?' It did me good to tear round a little."

We have a letter that the King wrote to Madame de Maintenon on his way back with the little princess from Montargis. He describes her much as Madame has done and concludes: "To talk frankly to you, as I al-

ways do, I find her just as one would wish, and I should be sorry to have her any older. So far I have done wonderfully well. I hope to keep up a certain easy air that I have assumed, until we reach Fontainebleau, where I am longing to be once more."

Madame de Maintenon, for her part, corroborates what Madame has written about the attentions shown her by the Duchesse de Bourgogne, who had been carefully taught the way to the King's heart: "The princess is so polite that it prevents her from saying the least thing that is disagreeable. I tried to resist the caresses she bestowed upon me by telling her I was too old. 'Ah, not so old!' she said to me. She came and kissed me after the King had left her room, made me sit down and, seating herself with a flattering air on my knees, she said: 'Mamma told me to express her great friendship for you, and to ask for yours for me. I beg of you to teach me how to please the King.' Such were her words, but I cannot express the sweetness, gayety and grace that accompanied them." Madame de Maintenon assumed practically the whole care of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and Madame never approved the principle on which she was educated, which was, apparently, that she might do whatever she pleased. Madame declares that she would hear the very valets say, "Come, let us play with the Duchesse de Bourgogne!" and would see them seize the child's feet and drag her along the ground.

The wedding took place when the Princess was twelve, and the ceremonies are described in detail by the *Mercure de France*, the society journal of the day: "They formed in line of march for the chapel. The Duc de Bourgogne and the Princess of Savoy marched in front of his Majesty; the princes and princesses marched according to their rank. Never was magnificence in dress pushed so far. The King's costume was of cloth of gold trimmed along the borders with a thick and rich embroidery of gold. *Monseigneur* (the Dauphin) was clad in gold brocade with gold embroidery on the borders. The dress of his Grace the Duc de Bourgogne was of black velvet with a cloak; it was embroidered all over with gold, and the cloak was lined with a fabric of silver likewise embroidered with gold, but in a delicate pattern. He was in doublet, with open-work breeches and great garters covered with lace such as were formerly worn. There were bows and ribbons on his shoes and a bunch of plumes in his hat. The dress of the Princess of Savoy was of cloth of silver embroidered with silver and trimmed with rubies and pearls. . . . Monsieur's dress was superb. It was of black velvet with thick buttonholes of gold embroidery in constant succession, and great diamond buttons. His waistcoat was of gold, and everything that went with his dress was of the same richness. . . . Madame, the Duchesse de Chartres, and *Madame la duchesse* had



THE CÉIL DE BœUF OR KING'S ANTECHAMBER

dresses of about the same quality, namely, of the finest gold material with gold trimmings, the heaviest and richest that could be made. Their head-dresses and bodices were adorned with every kind of precious stone." We learn from Dangeau that the bride wore all the crown jewels, worth nearly twelve million francs, and that some one had to stand by her to prevent her from falling over with the weight. Madame writes of herself: "I had on a skirt and underskirt so abominably heavy that I could scarcely stand. It was all of curled gold, with black chenille to form the flowers, and the ornaments were pearls and diamonds. . . . My daughter had on a green velvet dress with upper and underskirt embroidered with gold, and the whole waist bordered with rubies and diamonds. The embroidery was carefully made so that each rose seemed inserted. On the head were the full insignia and *poinçons* of rubies and gold ribbon and covered with diamonds."

"A great number of lords and ladies," continues the *Mercure*, "had dresses in no way inferior to those I have described to you. Those ladies who were no longer in their first youth were clad in black velvet, with very fine skirts either embroidered or braided with gold, and were adorned with rich diamond crosses. In all this brilliancy the court passed along the *galerie [des glaces]*, through the apartments, down the staircase, and into the chapel." After the service came the breakfast in

the apartment of the Duchesse de Bourgogne. Then came more festivities, fireworks, an illumination, and supper. "We went straight to table," writes Madame, "which was in the shape of a horseshoe. No one ate with us except those of the royal house and all the bastards. Madame de Verneuil ate with us too, because she was the widow of Henry IV's bastard. The time did not seem long to me, for I sat next to my dear Duc de Berry, who kept me laughing. He said: 'I see my brother making eyes at his little wife, but if I wanted I could make eyes very well, too. I've known for a long time how to make eyes; you only need to look steadily, and sideways;' and he imitated his brother right comically."

"On leaving the table," writes Saint-Simon, "they went to put the bride to bed, and the King made absolutely all the men go out of her room. All the ladies stayed, and the Queen of England gave her the *chemise* which was handed by the Duchesse du Lude. The Duc de Bourgogne undressed in the antechamber in the midst of the whole court and seated on a folding stool. The King was there with all the princes. The King of England gave him the shirt, which was handed by the Duc de Beauvillier. As soon as the Duchesse de Bourgogne was in bed, the Duc de Bourgogne entered and placed himself in the bed at her right side in the presence of the Kings and of the whole court, and soon after-

wards the King and Queen of England left. The King went to bed, and every one left the nuptial chamber except *Monseigneur*, the princess's ladies, and the Duc de Beauvillier who remained the whole time at the bolster of the bed on the side of his pupil, and the Duchesse du Lude on the other. *Monseigneur* remained talking with them for a quarter of an hour, but for which they would have felt rather awkward. Then he made his son rise, but first made him kiss the Princess in spite of the opposition of the Duchesse du Lude. It turned out that she was not in the wrong: the King disapproved, and said he did not wish his grandson to kiss the end of his wife's finger until they were entirely together. He dressed again in the antechamber because it was cold, and went to bed in his own room as usual. The little De Berry, full of fun and with his own opinions, found the docility of his brother all wrong, and assured them that he himself would have remained in the bed."

The festivities continued for days. At the ball on December 11 the costumes were almost finer than at the wedding itself. The *Mercure* relates that the majority of the nobles, besides their gold-embroidered suits, had "very rich shoulder-knots, bunches of plumes, several *étages* high, sleeves loaded with gold and silver lace and ribbons, gloves likewise garnished with lace, silk stockings of various colors and embroidered with

gold, and ribbons on their shoes." The ladies were still more superbly dressed; their skirts were "braided with a richness one could not express."

But it would simply be tiresome to rehearse the different variations of gold and jewels on velvet or cloth of gold. Nor can we delay to tell of the magnificent collation that was wheeled in on tables adorned not with table-cloths but with "moss and verdure." At another ball three days later the Duchesse de Bourgogne wore "a dress of black velvet entirely covered with diamonds. Her hair was matted with pearls, and all the rest of her head-dress was so filled with diamonds that one does not exaggerate in saying that she was almost too dazzling to behold." Madame's own skirt was "braided with rubies and diamonds," and her daughter's dress had "large diamonds and pearls on all the seams." Her *jupe entre-deux*, whatever that may be, was trimmed all over with Spanish point lace and silver. One can well believe the assertion of the *Mercure* that at these balls the "dresses alone were worth several millions."

Madame has forebodings as to the future of the Duchesse de Bourgogne. "I do not know," she writes, "if the Duchesse de Bourgogne will be more fortunate than the Dauphiness, the Grand Duchess, and myself; for when we first came we were all, each in turn, *merveilleux*. But they soon tired of us." As time went on the little



MONSIEUR'S DRESS AT THE BOURGOGNE WEDDING

Princess was to side more and more squarely with Madame's enemies and to treat her with great rudeness. "Every day she does something rude to me," she once writes; "at the King's table she has the dishes I wish to eat snatched away from under my very nose. When I go to see her, she looks at me over her shoulder and says nothing, or she laughs at me with her ladies. The old woman orders that expressly; she hopes I will get angry and lose my temper."

The character of the Duc de Bourgogne went through several phases. Madame complains at first of his horrible debauchery and of his pride and arrogance. But then he becomes "so horribly devout that I think he is getting quite idiotic and may turn into a quietist." Even the King is alarmed and says to him sarcastically, when summoning him to an important council, "Unless you prefer to go to vespers." Madame thinks his wife's flirtations ought to be mortification enough for him, and tells how he "goes no longer to plays, will hear of no opera, and turns the finest operatic melodies into hymns." And she finds his prudishness even more unprincely than his devoutness. She tells how a lady of the court tried to kiss him by force: "For a long time he resisted; and when his strength was at an end, he stuck a great pin into her head so that she had to take to her room and to her bed. Even Joseph was not so bad as that; he merely left his coat and ran, but did not hit and stab.

That was more like a monk of La Trappe." Eventually the Duc de Bourgogne struck a happy medium between his debauchery and his piety, and Madame came to admire him greatly.

In 1698 Madame's daughter, the young Elizabeth Charlotte, was married to the Duc de Lorraine, who was technically known as a foreign prince or *prince étranger*. "The foreign princes," writes Sainctot, in his ceremonial, "are those descended from a sovereign family who have settled in France and whom the King himself has recognized as such; as, for instance, the princes of the house of Lorraine, of Monaco, of Rohan, and of Bouillon, and La Tremouille. They are called 'foreign princes' because they may not succeed to the throne." Madame has no enthusiasm for this Lorraine match; and indeed no one would have ventured to prophesy at that time that the young Duchess's son would one day become Holy Roman Emperor and that her granddaughter, Marie Antoinette, would become Queen of France.

Madame writes of the wedding: "I do not know if my daughter's marriage will end well, but it began very sadly; for when they united them, every one in the chapel wept, — the King, the King and Queen of England, all the princesses, all the clergy, all the courtiers down to the guards and Swiss, all the envoys, the people; in short, every one. Every one has wept bitter tears — with the exception of the Dauphin who did not shed a

single tear and looked on the whole thing as a spectacle. The Duchesse de Bourgogne has at last shown that she has a good heart, for she was so sad that she could not eat and did nothing but weep bitterly after saying good-by to her aunt. . . .

"I think in Lorraine they will find my daughter not badly equipped. She has 20,000 thalers' worth of linens and laces, very fine and in great quantity — four large, strong chests full."

Madame writes about this time that the "match is not so delightful as to make one rejoice much, but not unreasonable enough to make one sad . . . my only consolation in this marriage is that we shall not have *Stinknase*." It speaks well for Madame's control of herself that with her own daughter-in-law she never, so far as is known, had a quarrel or scene of any kind. "One lives outwardly on good terms here," she once writes from Versailles, "but all are really like cats and dogs as regards each other." Inwardly, at all events, Madame seethes like a volcano; she writes that she cannot stand that crooked figure, that painted face, those pendent cheeks, that pursed-up mouth, that air of indolence "as though she would like larks ready roasted to drop into her mouth. . . . Her pride and ill-humor are unbearable and her face is thoroughly unpleasant. She has a horrible way of talking as though her mouth were full of meal, and her head is always wagging. . . . I have to see

this cursed creature every day before my eyes; it is a hellish torture." Her favorite simile for her is mouse-excrement that has contaminated the pepper. She writes in 1696: "Our mouse-excrement has again drunk herself full to the brim. I fear she will never in her life shake off the habit." "Drinking is dreadfully common among women of quality in this country," Madame writes later in another connection, "five of them recently got raving drunk, and when they no longer knew what they were doing, they took the drunkenest one, laid her on the ground, and then kicked her all over until they had made her a perfect bladder." According to her, her daughter-in-law got drunk three times a week. Even as long as twenty years after the wedding Madame writes of poor Madame d'Orleans: "With all her gravity she is never without some affair; though to tell the honest truth she keeps herself well within bounds and will never cause an *éclat*. All Paris considers her a Vestal; but I who look closer know well how it stands. She lives on good terms with me, and I am careful not to cause her the least vexation. I advise my son, too, to live on good terms with her, for what good would an *éclat* be? The King would side with his daughter, and my son would have to keep her, *éclat* and all. So it is better to take no notice and live well together."

"One must confess the truth," she writes again; "my boy defiled himself terribly with this creature."



MADAME'S DRESS AT THE WEDDING

Her boy himself was no paragon. She tells how he carouses with female companions until eight o'clock in the morning, and looks as if he had just been pulled out of the grave. She gives later a list and description of his illegitimate children. He was mixed up — in 1696 — in the affair of a sorceress and poisoner, but the King suppressed the papers that compromised him. Madame writes to her son in this connection: "He [the King] has taken pains to prevent them from reading in full court your letters from one of your dearest confidants who will possibly be burned alive. O that you may look on this affair with the same horror that I do, and that it may cure you forever from associating with such *canaille*! My hair stands on end when I think of it; for if the King had not withdrawn your letters, you would have been lost forever in the minds of all honest people." She later speaks of "infamous purchases" her son has made for the woman who is "to be burned for the greatest and most horrible infamies in the world"; and declares that she has lost all hope of ever seeing him an honest man. And again: "This affair has made a furious commotion in Paris, and, as people always exaggerate, they say that my son was trying to learn to be a sorcerer. It has a very bad effect." Later, in 1712, she writes: "My son is just like the story of the fairies who were bidden to the christening. One wishes that the child be well formed; another that it be eloquent; the third that it

learn all the arts; the fourth that it learn bodily exercises, such as fencing, riding, and dancing; the fifth wishes him to thoroughly learn the art of war; the sixth to have more courage than another. But the seventh fairy, they have forgotten to invite to the christening, she says: 'I cannot take from the child what my sisters have given him, but all my life I shall be hostile to him so that everything good that they have given him shall be of no use. I will give him such an ugly walk that he shall be thought to be lame and hunch-backed; I will make him grow such a black beard and give him such grimaces as will completely disguise him; I will make him hate all bodily exercise; I will fill him with a weariness that shall make him hate all his arts, his music, his painting, his drawing; I will give him a love of loneliness and a horror of honest people; I will often bring him misfortune in war; I will persuade him that debauchery is very suitable for him; I will give him a horror for the advice of his best friends, — and therewith all the good shall be destroyed with which my sisters have endowed him.'

"That is exactly what has happened and that is why he would rather sit with his daughter and her chambermaids, listening to silly jokes, than frequent upright people or govern his own household as his rank demands. Now your Grace knows all about it. . . ."

The King's coldness to Madame grows very marked. She writes in 1696: "They treat me very rudely here.

Every day they let me wait half an hour at the King's door before admitting me. They often send me away entirely. . . . It is a little hard to swallow that they treat one like a chambermaid. Monsieur himself encourages it, and the worse they treat me, the better he likes it." She grew very pessimistic. "The splendor and renown of great courts," she later writes, "is like the scenery of an opera. Viewed from afar all is brilliant and attractive; but go behind the scenes, look at the ropes and pulleys, and nothing can be more sordid and disgusting. . . . You are quite right to thank God you are single, for the best marriages are devilishly bad. I am neither pretty, young, nor rich, but were I all three together and a handsome shapely emperor wanted me, I should decline with thanks. . . . To be Madame is a miserable trade. Could I have sold it as they sell the court posts in this country, I should long since have put it on the 'market. . . . Had I known what I know now, France would never have seen me." No good, she declares, ever came of changing one's religion.

Yet all the same she writes again later: "Court life has this about it, and it has always been found, that however badly it may suit them, those who are accustomed to it can never endure any other kind of life."

She goes on for years being in the court, but not of it. "I am only in limbo," she writes in 1699, "where one hears the joys of Paradise from afar, but does not share them."

In the same breath she tells of a visit to Madame de Maintenon, whom she found sitting in an arm-chair with some of the princes of the blood around her on *tabourets*: "They did me the honor of bringing me a *tabouret* too, but I assured them I was not tired. I had to bite my tongue to keep from laughing. Times have indeed changed since the King came to beg me to allow Madame Scarron to eat with me just once merely to cut the Duc du Maine's food!"

* * * * *

In 1700 came the turning point in Louis XIV's career. He broke his treaties regarding the succession to the throne of Spain and accepted the whole inheritance for his second grandson, the Duc d'Anjou, thus drawing down upon himself a ruinous war which lasted for fourteen years.

Madame has most interesting letters on the acceptance of the crown, on the ceremony with which the new King of Spain was treated by his own father and grandfather, and on the leave-taking and departure, which, as was doubtless anticipated at the time, was to be forever. On November 10, 1700, Madame writes: "To-day I will tell your Grace a great piece of news that came yesterday morning, though they have long anticipated it, namely, the death of the King of Spain. The Queen [of Spain] is said to be ill with grief. The King died on the 1st of this month at three in the afternoon.



THE DUC D'ANJOU

To-day they sent our King the copy of the will. The Duc d'Anjou is appointed heir, and a grandee of Spain is said to have taken post at once with the original will in order to bring it to the Duc d'Anjou and invite him to be King. In case the King [Louis XIV] refuses it for the Duc d'Anjou, the same grandee of Spain has orders at once to proceed to Vienna and offer the crown of Spain to the Emperor. I imagine therefore that they are a little embarrassed here about the treaty that has been concluded with Holland and England. If they refuse the crown, they will be playing the Duc d'Anjou a mean trick. I have been assured that the King publicly took the Pantocrate with him yesterday into the council, which seemed a little strange to the courtiers. We shall soon see what the result will be; as soon as I learn I will tell your Grace. The Pantocrate is polite when she wishes to be; it is true she has not the *grand air*, but where should she have got it from?"

A few days later we have this: "Yesterday every one was whispering in the other's ear, 'Don't mention it, but the King has accepted the crown of Spain for the Duc d'Anjou.' I kept perfectly still, but when on the hunt I heard the Duc d'Anjou behind me on a narrow road, I stopped short and said: 'Pass on, great King, pass on, your Majesty!' I wish your Grace could have seen how amazed the good child was that I should know about it. His little brother, the

Duc de Berry, nearly died laughing over it. He, the Duc d'Anjou, looks just like a King of Spain, — seldom laughs and never loses his gravity. They say the King secretly told him yesterday that he was King, but that he was not to let any one know about it. He was playing *l'ombre* in his room, but he could not restrain himself. He said nothing, indeed, but sprang up. But immediately he sat down again with his former gravity, as if he knew nothing about it. It is true this young King has not so much vivacity as his youngest little brother, nor so much intelligence. But otherwise he has exceptionally good qualities: a good disposition, is generous (which few of his house are); truthful, for nothing in the world can make him tell a lie, and one cannot have a greater horror of lying than he has. He will also keep his promises, is merciful, has courage: in short, he is a right virtuous prince without any guile in him. Were he a common nobleman, one could say that he was a right honest man, and I believe that those who are to be around him will be happy. I believe he will be as strong as the King of Poland [Augustus the Strong], for already a year ago the strongest man here could not bend his wrists. He looks right Austrian, — always has his mouth open. I speak to him about it a hundred times. When he is told, he shuts his mouth, for he is very obedient. But as soon as he forgets himself, he opens his mouth again. He talks very little except with me; for I give him no rest but tor-

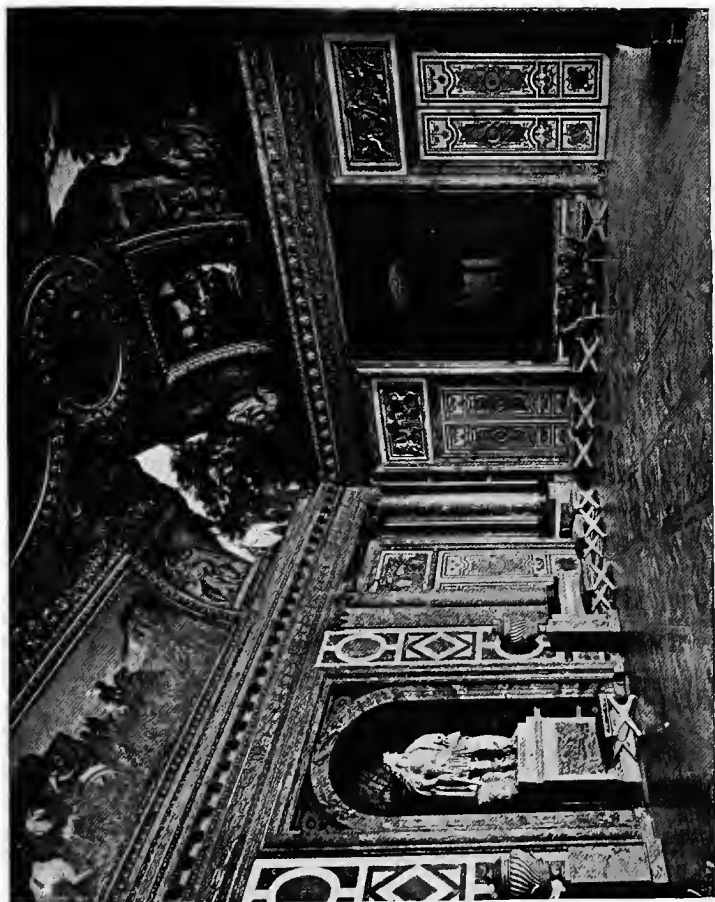
ment him the whole time. He has a harsh voice and speaks very slowly; I make him laugh sometimes, too. I like him better than the Duc du Bourgogne, for he is good, and not so scornful, — he is better looking, too. But the one I love from my heart, as if he were my own child, is the Duc de Berry. He is a nice child, always merry, and bursts out with the most comical things.”

On November 18 Madame writes as follows: “In order to amuse your Grace I will tell you how they made the Spanish King here. Tuesday morning the King summoned the good Duc d’Anjou to his cabinet and said to him, ‘You are King of Spain.’ Then he allowed the Spanish ambassadors and all the Spaniards who are living here to come in; they fell at their King’s feet and kissed his hand, one after the other, and then stood behind their King. Afterwards our King led the young King of Spain into the salon, where the whole court was assembled and said, ‘Gentlemen, behold the King of Spain; salute him.’ At once there was a cry of joy, and everyone came up and kissed the young King’s hand. Afterwards our King said, ‘Let us go and give thanks to God; come, your Majesty, to mass.’ He at once gave the young King his right hand, and they went together to the mass. The King made him kneel next to him on his *prie dieu* and on his right. After mass our King accompanied him to his apartment, which is the large one; afterwards his brothers came and visited him. My Duc de Berry was so happy

that he kissed the hand of his brother, the King of Spain, for joy. In the afternoon the young King drove to Meudon to visit his father, who is there. The latter went to meet him as far as the antechamber. He had just been in the garden and did not imagine that his son, the King of Spain, would come so soon; so he was out of breath when he arrived and said: 'I see one must never swear; for I should certainly have sworn that I would never put myself out of breath by going to meet my son, the Duc d'Anjou. Yet here I am, out of breath.' The good young King was quite put out of countenance at seeing himself treated like a foreign king by his father, who conducted him to his coach when he drove away. Yesterday morning *Monseigneur* returned the visit to his son, the King."

Of the King of Spain she writes ten years later, showing that his character had not changed in the meantime: "If one were to say to him 'stay there!' and put him in front of a hundred cannon, he would stand like a wall. Again, if those he is used to should say 'go away,' he would go at once. He does not trust himself, he does what he is told."

The departure for Spain took place on December 4. On the 5th Madame writes (and her letter shows that there were some human feelings left to all these people): "I must also tell your Grace about the sad day we had yesterday, and how the parting with the dear good King



ONE OF THE GRAND APARTMENTS

of Spain went off. Yesterday at nine in the morning every one waited in his room. At ten we all went with our King to the King of Spain, and from there to the mass which we heard from the gallery. I don't know whether it was the music that softened all hearts, but every one began to weep. After mass we went down the great staircase, which was perfectly full of people, as was also the outer court. The big Princesse de Conti and my son accompanied me to the coach, for they were not going with us to Sceaux. In the King's coach we were eight: the two Kings had the Duchesse de Bourgogne between them; the Dauphin and the Duc de Bourgogne had the Duc de Berry between them; Monsieur and I sat on the side seats. From here to Sceaux the road was lined with people on foot, on horseback and in coaches. The King had his guards, his light horse, and his gendarmes, and at Sceaux were the two companies of musketeers. The Avenue de Sceaux is very long, longer than from here to Trianon; on both sides it was occupied by three rows of coaches which had drawn up there to see the departure of the King of Spain. It is thought that there were more than two thousand coaches at Sceaux, not counting the King's and those that followed the court. As soon as we had got out at Sceaux, which by the way, belongs now to the Duc du Maine who bought it from young Seignelay, the King went through the double file into the last room and commanded that no one should follow. We all

stayed in a salon with *Monseigneur* and his two sons. A quarter of an hour later the King summoned the Spanish ambassador who stayed in there a little while. When he came out, the King called the Dauphin and remained another quarter of an hour with him. Afterwards the King called the Duc de Bourgogne, his wife, the Duc de Berry, Monsieur, and me, and there we took leave of the King of Spain, and his brothers. All wept heartily. We stayed a quarter of an hour, and then the King summoned the princes and princesses of the blood, who all took leave. Every one wept and wailed. The Dauphin, who generally seems quite indifferent, was terribly affected and embraced his son with such tenderness that I still have to weep when I so much as think of it. I thought father and son would die of grief. The good King embraced me also so from his heart that I could not speak a word for weeping. The King said at last, "Let some one go and see if everything is ready." Shortly afterwards a voice called, "Sire, everything is ready." "So much the worse," said the King of Spain. We embraced once again. The good Duc de Berry wept, and doubtless from the bottom of his heart; the Duc de Bourgogne did not actually weep, but his eyes were red. Our King accompanied the King of Spain to the end of the apartments. One heard and saw nothing but pocket handkerchiefs and wiping of eyes; men and women all wept bitterly. As soon as the King of Spain and his brothers had driven off, the Dauphin

got into his *chaise* and drove to Meudon, our King got into a little *calèche* with the Duchesse de Bourgogne, Monsieur and I took a drive and looked at Sceaux, which is a wonderfully beautiful garden."

* * * * * *

History was indeed in the making under Madame's eyes. She continues to follow the doings of William of England with great interest and to criticise King James' piety. "I cannot endure praying Kings," she writes in 1696; "that is not what God put them on their thrones for. . . . Let them pray morning and evening and make their subjects happy the rest of the time."

Of King James, Matthew Prior, the English poet, writes from Paris in 1698: "This court is gone to see their monarch a cock-horse at Compeigne. . . . I faced old James and all his court the other day at St. Cloud [where they had doubtless been to visit Madame]; *vive Guillaume!* You never saw such a strange figure as the old bully is, lean, worn, and riv'led, not unlike Neale the projectour; the Queen looks very melancholy, but otherwise well enough; their equipages are all very ragged and contemptible."

A friend of Prior's writes a little later to the Duke of Shrewsbury: "I had a letter from Prior yesterday. . . . He hears that King James and his Queen are highly caressed at Fontainebleau; that the chief court was made to Queen Mary, everybody being at her toilet in the morn-

ing; that the King of France comes thither to lead her to chapel; that at meals the Queen is placed between the two Kings at the upper end of the table, and equal marks of distinction and sovereignty are paid to all three, and *à boire pour le Roi d'Angleterre, ou pour la Reine* is spoken out as loud, and with as much ceremony, as for the King of France."

Yet all the same Madame writes in 1700: "They still live on polite terms with these royal personages here, but they *do* all that King William desires."

Madame herself had a curious antipathy to the English as a people. "It has been observed," she writes, "that all insular people are more false and malicious than those who live on *terra firma*. . . . Don't be so foolish, dear Louisa, as to die in England. . . . A good honest German is better than all the English put together. . . . The English are crazy people who are difficult to get along with and who all hate their Kings. When Lord Peterborough was here, he praised our King extremely. Some one said, 'What! are you praising Kings now?' 'I love all Kings,' he answered, 'except our own.' What hope or trust can one put in such people?"

After the Duke of Gloucester's death in August, 1700, Madame becomes more and more interested in English affairs because of her aunt's nearness to the succession. "It would be nice if your Grace could still be Queen," she writes: "I had rather it happened to your Grace than



THE FOUNTAIN OF LATONA

to myself." She is convinced that Queen Anne, because she is such a hard drinker, cannot live long. She fears, indeed, that it will be difficult for her aunt to keep such a crazy people as the English in order, but later she changes her tone and declares that she is grateful to the English for showing such affection for the Electress.

In the summer of 1701 King James' health began visibly to fail. It is his unbounded piety, Madame avers, that is killing him; and she tells how he has knelt and prayed so long that at last he fell over in a swoon. She drives to St. Germain to see him and finds him in a most wretched state, but grateful for her solicitude. She tells of touching scenes between him and his children, and of how they had to tear the Prince of Wales away from him by force. "Nothing was more pitiful than to see this court," so Madame writes; "they made me weep from my very heart. The good Queen is in an indescribable condition. It would move a stone to tears. . . . This King is dying like a regular saint. . . . Everything is most melancholy here; one hears of nothing but of agony, death, and misfortune." She tells of the famous assurance of Louis that he will regard and proclaim James' son as King of England, but adds, "I could not help thinking that it would do more harm than good to this young King."

She tells with some detail how they "opened" King James after his death and found "everything in his body

decayed and his heart withered up." And again: "No wonder King James' blood was entirely corrupted through the grief the poor King had to bear. He said before his death that he had suffered horribly, and that what had mortified him most had been that people had considered him unfeeling and despised him for it. . . . He was the best man in the world, but his weakness was priests. I have never seen a greater passion than he had for them. If he was in conversation with the King or one of us and a clerk or priest, especially a Jesuit, chanced to come into the room, he dropped everything and ran up to him."

To conclude here with Madame's relations to the exiled Stuarts, it may be said that she felt a warm affection for the Pretender and always hoped to see him back upon his throne. "The Prince of Wales," she writes in 1695, "is very well-behaved. I think with time he will have much intelligence, for he is full of vivacity. If what they tell me is true, he is not likely to become a bigot. English nuns had sent him a chapel which was very prettily made. His tutor, wishing to inspire him with a love of prayer, thought he could do it better in this doll's chapel, which was large enough for the Prince to enter. But the Prince of Wales, instead of praying, took a stick and broke the chapel to pieces. They were about to scold him, but he said, 'Why should I not hate what made me lose my kingdom?' These words so frightened the bystanders that nobody said anything more to him."

Madame writes in December, 1702: "Tuesday I drove to St. Germain and visited the unhappy royalties there. I am afraid the Queen will die finally, for her Majesty is as thin and dried up as a pole, looks pale as death, and night and day does nothing but weep. She cannot sleep any more at night and cannot become resigned to her misfortune; so I fear that her Majesty will waste away entirely. The little King is growing fast, but his chin is getting a little too thin. He is altogether very thin. The little Princess is large for her age, too, and has a pretty waist and figure; but her face is not pretty at all. She has pretty eyes, indeed, but a very big mouth, and the face is too long and narrow for her age. Good King James wrote letters to the King and to the late Monsieur which were found in his portfolio. They are perfect sermons."

In December, 1707, we have this: "Our young King of England may have good sense and intelligence, but he has no vivacity. He is well brought up, exceedingly polite, but always dreamy and sad and unhealthy. There is always something the matter. He laughs himself at his reveries and distractions and is not angry at all when one laughs at him for it. He has a very good disposition, has a great respect and love for the Queen, his mother, and a tender love for his sister, who is quite different in character from himself."

And in March, 1708, this: "We are daily expecting

news that our young King of England has arrived in Scotland. They have only once had news from his Majesty since they sailed away from Ostende with a good breeze. A frigate met this King a hundred miles from Dunkirk, and they had just had news that all Scotland had declared for him, was awaiting him with longing, and would immediately, as soon as his Majesty should have landed, proclaim him King. It serves Queen Anne right. She was so eager for war; now she will have war enough. They say it is her purse that has kept up the war until now; God grant that she may need her money, so that the Emperor may be compelled to make peace. . . . I had to laugh at your Grace calling the King of England the 'King *in partibus*,' like a bishop. But he really is the lawful heir."

"Is not the Chevalier St. George perfectly right to wish to mount the throne of his fathers," she asks in 1715, "and to do his utmost to that end? One can blame him as little for it as one can King George for wishing to maintain himself on his throne. . . . Lord Stairs thought Chevalier St. George had left Bar, but where should the poor prince go to without a ship and without troops? At the present moment there is certainly no danger from his expeditions, but in time war may come of it if this prince do not die soon. . . . There is a report here that the Chevalier St. George has fled, has found a bark, and gone to England. If so, King



THE OLD PRETENDER

George will have something to do. I wish you were all away from the cursed false people. . . .”

News comes of the landing: “I imagine a great many will be untrue to King George now that the Chevalier St. George is in Scotland. They told me this evening how he escaped. He was at Commercy, at the Prince de Vaudemont’s, and went stag hunting. After the hunt he gave them a hunt supper (a *retour de chasse*), they were at table until four in the morning. When he got to his room, he said that he had been up too late to rise early, and that they should let him sleep until two in the afternoon. When his people came to wake him at two, they found the bed empty. They were frightened and ran to Prince de Vaudemont. He pretended to know nothing about it, and said they must search for Chevalier St. George. After they had searched everywhere for him for an hour and not found him, the Prince de Vaudemont said: ‘Let us go to dinner, for all the drawbridges are up, and no one can leave this castle for three days.’ So the Chevalier St. George escaped incognito into Brittany. There, as a tourist, he took a fishing smack, that took him out to sea to a large Scotch ship, in which were many Scotch lords, who are with him in Scotland. . . .

“My God, how can they be merry in London with all the troubles! So long as King George and Chevalier St. George are living, the internal war cannot possibly

cease. That is not to be expected. . . . The Queen of England here is very stout-hearted and seldom looks sad. She has intelligence and firmness and is very agreeable in conversation. . . . What I see here, especially in the way of women, gives me more vexation and annoyance than pleasure. . . .

“If wishes were any use, I would wish that the Emperor might die without heirs, that our King George might be chosen Emperor of the Romans, and that young King James were in England making the best out of them that he can.”





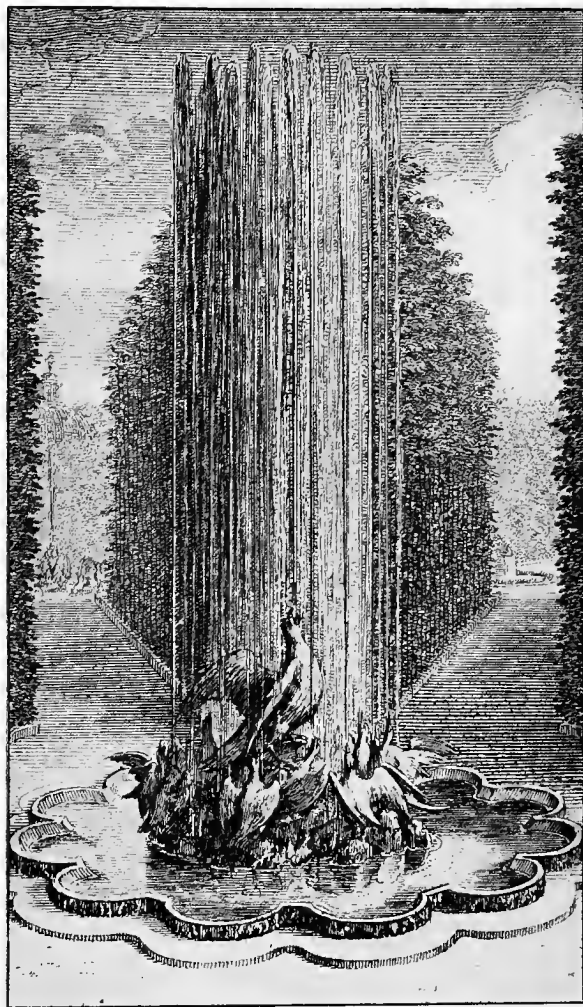
CHAPTER VI

MADAME'S INTERESTS — PECULIARITIES

WE must pass very rapidly over a number of years in Madame's life. Monsieur became pensive and sad, and his wife writes that it is because he finds that at sixty he cannot be as dissipated as in his prime. He is occasionally very disagreeable to her and once bursts out with "You are old, you are almost fifty years old!" She answers that she at any rate has the advantage of him, for he is twelve years older still. On the whole, however, the relations improve. When, in 1701, Monsieur was taken with a stroke of apoplexy, he was quite tender towards her, which touched her very much indeed. In announcing his death to her aunt she declares that she is the most unhappy woman in the world; and, indeed, she is long confined to her bed with fever. Once she rises, finds the box where he has kept his letters and destroys, unread, a host of compromising communications from his

wretched companions in vice. She intends that the world shall never know the worst.

She has to go through ceremonies that are irksome to her in the extreme. "I had to receive the King and Queen of England," she writes, "in an absurd costume — a white linen brow-band, over that a hood tied under the chin, over the hood a coif, over the coif a piece of linen like a veil which is fastened at the shoulders like a gauze mantle and trails to the length of seven ells. On my body I had a long black cloth coat with long sleeves reaching to the wrist, two handbreadths deep of ermine on the sleeves, a black crêpe girdle falling to the ground in front, and a train to the ermine skirt likewise seven ells long. In this costume they put me in a perfectly black room, with even the floor and the windows covered, in a black bed, with the train folded back so as to show the ermine. A great chandelier with twelve candles was lighted in the room, and there were ten or twelve more candles on the mantelpiece. All my servitors, large and small, were in long mourning mantles, and some forty or fifty ladies were in long gauze mantles. It was all perfectly horrid." Naturally enough her grief for Monsieur does not last long. She is glad when the King allows her to wear lighter mourning than is strictly *de rigueur*, and soon is chafing horribly because she cannot go to the plays. She permits her mind to dwell, too, on Monsieur's shortcomings.



A FOUNTAIN IN THE LABYRINTH

In the same year as Monsieur, King William of England died and was succeeded by the childless Queen Anne. But for her hollow conversion to Catholicism Madame would then have been the next heir to the throne. Her German friends seem to have cherished hopes for her in spite of the Act of Succession. She writes to her half-sister: "If the English were like other nations, one might hope that they would remain firm in their resolution regarding my aunt and her children; but it is a faithless and false nation on which one can never rely. I do not know if your and Frau von Ratsamshausen's ideas are identical; if they are the same, I can only answer that I am too old to think of anything but of ending my days in peace. No one thinks of me, and I can take my sacred oath that I have no other designs than those I have always professed. But all the same I am very much obliged to you, dear Louisa, for wishing me what you think would be for my good."

Monsieur left debts to the amount of seven and a half million francs, and all of Madame's jewels, even the pearls she has been in the habit of wearing, have to go towards filling the chasm. She writes later: "Since the late Monsieur's death I have worn only false pearls, but they are so exactly like the ones I had before that every one thinks them the same. I was once with the Queen of England at St. Germain, and, in coughing, the pearls broke from my neck. The Queen threw herself on the ground to search for the pearls. I helped her up and said: 'Ah, Madame,

your Majesty must not take this trouble. I am very munificent, I will leave my pearls to your people.' The Queen looked at me and said, 'God pardon me, from this discourse I almost fear that they are false.' I answered, 'Madame, you have said it.' 'The Queen had never noticed it, nor any one else.'

On the whole the King treats Madame most generously, and her income amounts to 450,000 francs a year. There is a reconciliation with him, and even with Madame de Maintenon, who pays her a long visit and has an intimate talk with her about her former shortcomings. According to Saint-Simon, who loves to tell anything derogatory to Madame, Madame de Maintenon flaunted in her enemy's face a letter to the latter's aunt which had been intercepted in the mail. Madame "nearly died on the spot." Further revelations "struck her motionless as a statue," and finally made her "weep, scream, confess, and demand pardon." Madame de Maintenon looked in cold triumph on the "proud and arrogant German," allowed her to weep, to seize her hands, and to grow hoarse with talking, but at last condescended to make friends.

There is no doubt about the reconciliation. Madame writes in 1702: "The King was so gracious day before yesterday as to summon me to Madame de Maintenon's. . . . Madame de Maintenon invited me by a note to the comedy of Absalom, to which I went." Madame is outwardly even too servile to Madame de Maintenon; one is



THE FOUNTAIN OF APOLLO IN WINTER

sorry to have to acknowledge that it is because it lies in her interests. She complains, however, "She [the Maintenon] is always very polite to me, and the King too; but there it stops." And again she writes that she alone of the royal household is not of the inner circle and may not go into the King's private apartments — the holy of holies she always calls it. She writes in 1709 that she only sees the King at ten at night at supper; that after supper she goes to the King's outer room, "where I stand about long enough to say a Lord's Prayer and make a courtesy. The King goes into his cabinet with the princes and the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and I to my room, where I give my doggies biscuit, wind my clocks, look at my rare stones, change my rings, and then, to bed." Her doggies, she declares, are the most faithful friends she has in France. Six of them sleep in her bed at night. She has just heard of a new invention called eider-down quilts. "I never in my life heard of an eider-down quilt," she writes. "What keeps me right warm in bed are six little doggies which lie round me. No quilt is as warm as the good doggies."

She has invented beautiful names for them: *Titi*, *Charmille*, *Boabdille*, and the like. She has one called *Candace née Robe*, "She is called *née Robe*," she writes, "because her mother, Charmille, gave birth to her on my velvet skirt as I was talking to Madame la Princesse [of Condé] on a divan. Madame la Princesse suddenly said to

me, 'Your dog is acting queerly,' and putting my hand behind me, I found the little animal all wrapped up in its skin and still on my dress."

Madame has grown very stout by this time, — with the fat all in the wrong places, she explains, — and she declares that when she wears hanging sleeves, she looks for all the world like an Indian pagoda. She "has to laugh about the pagoda every time she passes a mirror." But she is not always laughing; and perhaps this letter will show a side of her character that my readers have little suspected. It is from Versailles, where her room looked directly on to the terrace and across to the forest: "It is here the finest weather in the world. Last night I listened at a window to the singing of the nightingales until half-past twelve. I had all the windows open; there was not a breeze stirring. Everything is now green, and a lovely spring with clear skies has come upon us. It reminds me of what I heard in my youth in Heidelberg in a play in which my dead brother acted, 'O Spring, youth of the year, beautiful mother of the flowers, of the green herbs, and of fresh love, you indeed return; but with' you does not return the lovely joyous springtime of my youth.'"

On another occasion she wrote in a similar moralizing strain: "It seems to me that we are our Lord God's marionettes; for we are made to go to and fro and play all sorts of personages, and then all at once we fall and the play is ended. The Punchinello is Death,



THE ELECTRESS SOPHIA

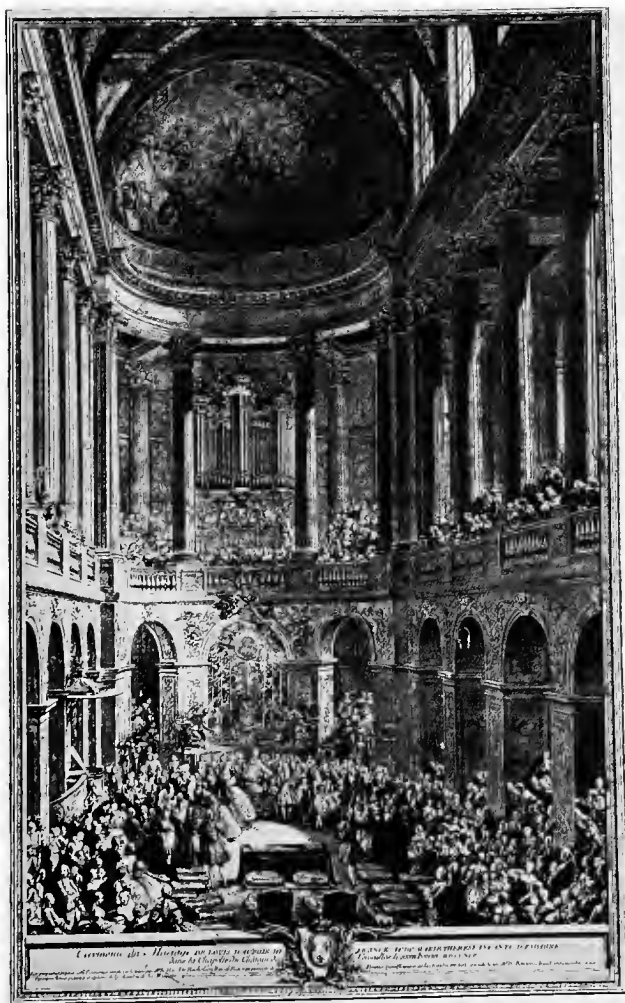
who gives each his final blow and thrusts him off the stage."

The reader must have realized by this time what a really rare talent Madame had for letter-writing. Her aunt in Hanover showed some of the letters to the great Leibnitz, who evidently was very complimentary about them. Madame writes: "I am glad Monsieur Leibnitz has never seen me, or he would soon lose his high opinion of me and would find, as the *precieuses* say, 'that I have the form very much hidden in the matter.' But it does give me pleasure that so sensible a man as he should consider that I have *lumières*. It makes me right proud."

There is indeed a spontaneity about the letters that is irresistible, — especially when one considers that she usually carried on conversation while she was writing. "I have had to accustom myself to talk to people when I am writing," she says, "for here one makes enemies if one does not talk to people. But there is one good thing about it: it is all the same what one says to them; if they are only spoken to, they are satisfied." She would so much rather be alone! "Darling Louisa," she once writes, "I believe the devil in hell has escaped from his chains to drive me crazy. . . . When I was just about to answer you and Mademoiselle de Malauze, the devil *au contretemps* sent half a dozen duchesses, who made me lose all my time." And again: "There come a lot of princes. . . . My God,

how often one is interrupted!" Her regular habit was to take the last letter of her correspondent and answer it paragraph by paragraph; but a name or a statement will start her off on reminiscences. Some one mentions Leibnitz, for instance. That reminds her of Descartes, and we have the following: "Descartes's idea of the watch seems to me in very bad taste. Once I embarrassed a bishop who is entirely of Descartes's opinion. The bishop is naturally jealous, and I said to him: 'When you are jealous, are you machine or man? For I know nothing more jealous than you except my dogs, and should like to know if it is a movement of the machine or a passion of the soul.' He got angry and went away without giving me an answer."

Here is a good specimen of her casual style: "I am sorry you were so hasty and had two sound teeth drawn. That is just the way to lose them all, one after the other; for if you have teeth drawn, it is sure to send the humors over to the other teeth, and one is lucky if one does not lose them all. Our King lost all his that way. Only two of mine are gone; they broke in my mouth. Another, front one, is broken, and all the rest are frightfully gray and yellow, but they have not hurt me so far — I'm afraid I'm not clever! I read your last letter so hastily as not to notice that what you, dear Louisa, had had drawn, and what worried me so, were blisters and not teeth. I have to laugh at my own foolishness. One need not make excuses when



THE CHAPEL

talking of teeth, for there is nothing to be ashamed of about them."

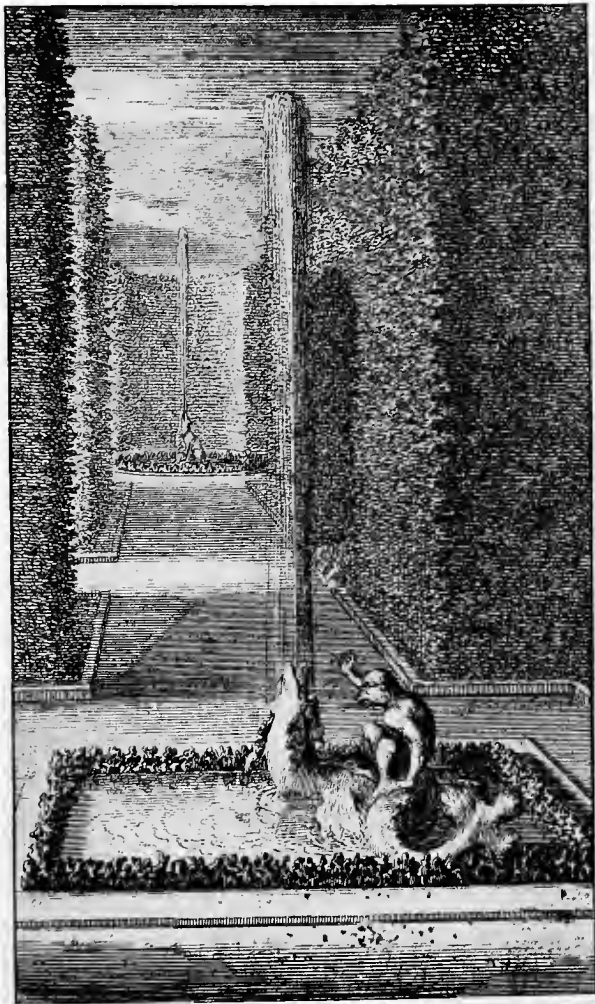
Nothing worries her, least of all her dogs. "Titi has just jumped on the table and blotted out what I had written," she writes — but continues on the same page.

It is in her letters to the Electress that Madame is most frank and outspoken, particularly in letters she is able to forward to her by private hand. For, as I have said, there was a regular department of the government known as the *cabinet noir* for tampering with private letters in the post, and Madame, according to her own account at least, was under constant surveillance — possibly because of her Protestant sympathies.

"That the letters are well sealed signifies nothing," Madame once writes. "They have a mixture of quicksilver and other stuff; this they press on the seal, taking its exact size. When the impression is taken and they expose it to the air, it gets very hard, and they can use it for sealing again. From the letter they break off all the wax, noticing whether it is black or red. When they have read and copied the letter, they seal it again neatly. No one can tell that it has been opened. My son can make the amalgam; I use it just for fun." Once, she declares, in reënclosing her letters they have put into one of them sheets that belonged in another. She frequently writes little messages to the "gentlemen who open my letters," hopes that they will translate her German better next

time, declares they had better not get her angry, and hurls dire threats at them. "Be it known to the inquisitive and curious, that I am not a bit afraid of them," she once interpolates; ". . . that is what is called an *avis au lecteur*." "It is pure arrogance and malice," she writes late in life, "that the post goes so irregularly; for the letters never need take more than a week to arrive. But then there would be no provision for inquisitive curiosity. They ought by rights to be tired of my letters after reading them constantly for forty-nine years. I suspect it is the fault neither of Prince Taxis nor of Baron Weltz that my letters go wrong, but of Torcy and the Archbishop of Cambray, — not loving me especially, they try to find something in my letters that will get me into trouble."

After the Electress Sophia's death in 1714 it is Louisa, Madame's half-sister, who falls heir to the chief outpourings of her heart. "Of all my correspondents," Madame writes to the latter, "there is only one in whose letters I could take pleasure, and she is no more. I mean our dear Electress. My daughter's letters are agreeable to me, but they are never gay; for she is always either ill, *enceinte*, or has some other complaint to make. The Queen of Sicily, whom I love, too, as though she were my own child, is still full of grief over the loss of her eldest prince. The letters of the Queen of Spain at Bayonne, consist of nothing but compliments and commissions. . . . She seems a good creature, but I wish she would not use childish words to which I am



A FOUNTAIN IN THE LABYRINTH

not accustomed, like *Herzensmamachen*, 'little treasure,' 'little heart.' I shall never be able to get used to them, so these letters can give me no pleasure either: so I tell you truly, dear Louisa, your letters are among the most agreeable I can now receive." How large her correspondence was may be gathered from the following: "To-day, Sunday, for example, I have to write to you and to Lorraine; Mondays to the Queen of Prussia, the Queen of Spain in Bayonne, and the Queen of Sicily; Tuesdays I write again to Lorraine and to the Princess of Wales, to whom I write twenty sheets at the very least — usually twenty-four or even twenty-eight like these [her letters are on especially large gold-rimmed paper]; Thursdays I write to you, dear Louisa, to Monsieur Harling, and to Baron Goertz; Fridays I have again the English and the Lorraine posts."

"Dear Louisa," a plain, pious old maid who once writes to know if it is proper to mention one's foot in company, was very much honored by the devotion Madame showed her, and would try to explain how unattractive she was and how little she could do in return. Madame wrote to her once: "Do you think I want merely Venuses or beautiful Helens, and that I have none about me but dancers and acrobats? Your immoderate humility makes me laugh. Why should I not be fond of you? Are we not closely enough related for that? Ah! now the reason strikes me — your debauchery and godless life!

I did not think of it at first, but that must be it! But those one sees here, particularly the princesses of the blood, are so virtuous that they have virtue to spare, dear Louisa, — more than enough to cover your faults. All except Madame la Princesse, — she is as godless and debauched as yourself.”

The letters are avowedly for the purpose of entertaining, which fact must be taken into consideration in judging Madame’s character. She tells after the Electress’s death how she had made a practice of collecting everything she could for her amusement; and as the Electress herself was daring, witty, and profane, it may be taken for granted that many of Madame’s worst utterances were for the express purpose of outdoing her. The tone of the letters varies very much according to the correspondent. With the Princess of Wales, wife of George II, she confines herself mainly to harmless reminiscences, for Louisa has sent her an urgent warning not to be too confidential.

Madame’s topics vary all the way from discussions on the foundations of religious belief to a description of the Duchesse de Bourgogne’s latest dress. The notes on religion are particularly edifying. She believes in another world: “I think that even were it not true that there is another life after this, one would do well to imagine it, if only for one’s own consolation. It is really too horrible to be nothing but food for the worms.” But she does not expect to meet again those whom she has known here below:



THE DUCHESS OF BOURGOGNE'S LATEST DRESS

"I conclude that that world will be different and that one will think of nothing but our Lord God and of praising Him. . . . So my own death cannot console me for those I have lost; it can only console me for leaving all that is wicked and vexatious here and enjoying eternal rest." In this connection she writes again: "As to our knowing each other in the other world, there we are of different opinions, dear Louisa. Were that the case, an entirely new miracle would have to happen. When we have been twenty or thirty years without seeing our best friends, we scarcely know them again, let alone when one has been dead so many hundred years. That is my opinion. Why should our Lord God make nothing perfect except what is in our shape? . . . Is it not favor enough that He should have given us His only Son to free us from everlasting damnation? What more can we ask of Him?"

Among her religious duties Madame did not reckon the kind of devoutness she saw about her. She writes: "I believe Monsieur is 'devout' so as to be like Henry III in everything. If that is the way to heaven, I shall certainly not get in. Unless I have to hear grand mass, I am quickly through with our service, for I have a chaplain who gets through the mass in a quarter of an hour. That is the right way for me. . . . In 'devoutness,' as I see it here, every one follows his own natural bent. Those who are fond of talking incline to pray a great deal; those who are generous wish always to give alms; those who are

easily angered and choleric always get excited and want to kill everything; those, on the other hand, who are merry by nature think that they are doing God a service by rejoicing over everything and being angered at nothing: in short, he who gives himself over to devoutness sets himself up as the touchstone to show his true character. But those that I find worst of all are the ones who have ambition in their heads and wish to rule everything under the mantle of devoutness, giving out that they are doing God a great service by bringing everything into their power. The easiest to get along with are the ones that have been very much in love; for they, if they once take God for an object, think of nothing else but of saying tender things to our Lord God and leave other people in peace."

In another letter Madame tells us in just what her own "devoutness" consists: "I am not so fortunate as to have a faith strong enough to move mountains, and I am too straightforward to pretend to be devout without being so. So I content myself with not sinning too badly against the commandments and in not harming my neighbor. I admire God Almighty without understanding Him. I praise Him morning and evening, let Him continue to rule as He pleases, and submit to His will. For apart from it I well know that nothing can happen. Now your Grace knows all my 'devoutness.' . . ."

In doctrine Madame was a Calvinist, as was natural for

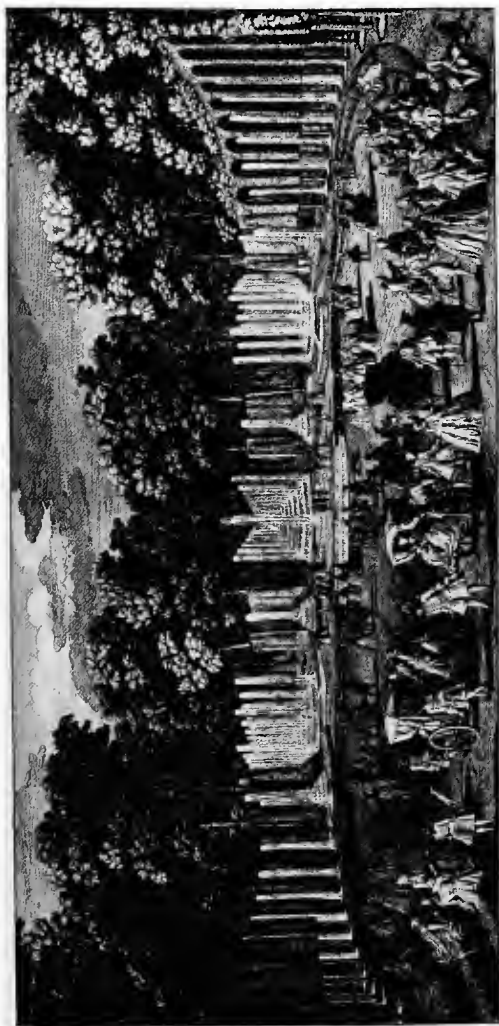
one brought up in the Palatinate. But she contends that neither Luther nor Calvin should have seceded from the church. She is a firm believer in predestination. "I am heartily glad," she writes, "that your Grace is of my opinion and believe in a destiny and sequence in everything. One sees it so plainly in a hundred matters that I cannot comprehend how one can doubt it. However strong may be our love of self, which alone can make us think that our wills are free, we nevertheless so often find in our lives that something besides our will impels and guides us that beyond a doubt we do nothing but what was long since prescribed for us, and one thing brings about another."

There was no asceticism in her creed. "God pardon me," she writes, "but on account of my sins I have never in my life been able to weep." And again: "There are many places in the Bible that say that one must mortify the body; the Old and the New Testament are full of it. But I think it is enough to bear patiently the evil that comes to us from the hand of God without torturing ourselves. I never could endure La Trappe. What did it signify to all those poor people that the Abbé de Rancé lost his mistress, Madame de Montbazon, and was in despair? For that made him think out La Trappe, and nothing else in the world. I don't consider that devoutness in the least. But *apropos!* I forget that I had to promise my confessor not to speak of this."

She considered the Inquisition "a perfectly devilish thing" and hated the Dominicans like monsters: "They seem to me like executioners . . . I do not believe that it is permitted to any one to say, 'These shall be saved, and those damned.' "

Madame, besides going to chapel, read three chapters of the Bible a day, and if she missed one or more days, made it up later. She read critically, too, in spite of her own assertions to the contrary. "I take in and understand the Bible still less than your Grace," she writes, "but I like to read the Bible, especially the Old Testament. What I least like to read in the Bible are the Epistles; I find them confused and tiresome. . . . Titi has just jumped on my paper and made me make two blots. I humbly beg pardon, but I hope your Grace will dispense me from copying this letter and graciously excuse Titi's impertinence, for I have a great deal to write to-day. I must still write letters to Spain, England, and Lorraine, and also two or three to Paris." •

Here are some of her criticisms of the Bible: "If we take the devil as he appears in Job, it seems as if he were the Lord God's buffoon and not hated of God, for he converses in a friendly manner with Him. But this is opposed to what the clergy say, that the devil's greatest torture is in being condemned never to see Almighty God. They ought to arrange it so as to accord better with the Holy Gospel. . . . To tell the truth, the dialogue between our



THE WATER THEATRE

Lord God, and the devil is a little *sujet à caution*, as they say here. . . .

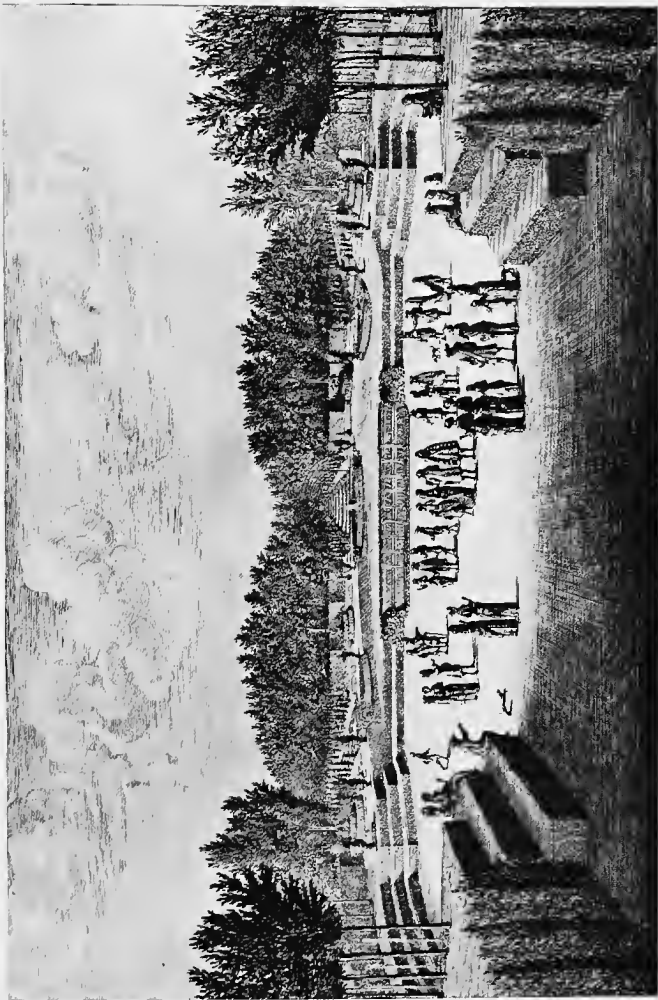
"I cannot conceive how one could imagine for a moment that the Song of Solomon was made for purposes of devotion; especially as it comes from a king who was so fond of women. . . . I often wonder that, in our Lord Christ's time, they were so very little curious. That they did not question our Lord Christ much is perfectly right; respect did not allow it. But Lazarus, to whom no respect was due — him they ought to have thoroughly examined about the other world. Had my brother risen from the dead, I certainly should not have failed to question him, and that simply with the intention of better serving God Almighty."

Of superstition in others Madame was very tolerant. "Here we have nothing but rain, thunder, and lightning," she writes; "that makes those who believe in witches think wizards are hiding in the clouds, which I don't believe at all; but I like to hear the stories about it. . . . If those who are considered witches are mixed up with poison or sacrilege, they cannot be too severely punished, and I should have no scruples about burning such people. But they should not be burned for riding through chimneys on brooms or pitchforks, for hiding in the winds, turning themselves into cats, or other such incredible things."

Some of Madame's ideas on medicine, as expressed in her letters, seem to us primitive enough to-day. "The

fellow who cut my hair," she once writes, "was so slow that it took him an hour and a half; and he held the hot curling iron so long on my head that I think it melted some of the humors, which fell into my throat, and at once caused coughing and cold." Of the exterior of the doctors she gives an interesting description: "The doctors here do not go in gowns and turn-down collars as in Germany, but wear neck-cloths and gray suits with gold buttons and button-holes, and fine large wigs. One would take Monsieur Teray, who is not old and has a good figure, for a colonel rather than a doctor."

She has her own little remedies, among them an English one called "Milady Kent powder." With this, the chief effect of which seems to have been to put the patient in a perspiration, she declares she has saved many lives. Here is a remedy that she gives for a bloodshot eye: "Put sugar candy in white rose-water, and then administer it to the eye. However bloodshot it may be, it will be all right in a few days." This result, one imagines, time might have achieved without the remedy; but at any rate, as she suggests herself, it can do no harm. The same is true of the following recommendation: "I will teach you a little art that has been taught me here, and that is perfectly certain, for not getting a swollen finger. If you prick your finger another time, cut the nail a little away from the finger that was pricked, and put the finger, where it was pricked,



ANOTHER VIEW OF THE WATER THEATRE

behind the ear and rub it a little. I assure you no swelling will ever result from it."

She writes of another remedy: "I should not object to the Nuremburg plaster that makes the back itch; for I find scratching the back such a great pleasure that many things which are considered pleasures do not come up to it."

Madame lived long enough to become a convert to inoculation in spite of the fact that her own body-physician did not consider the remedy a sure one, and said that he did not comprehend it: "But between ourselves doctors are not to be believed in such matters; for what does not fit into their scheme they never admire and think it a sort of derogation to themselves."

But Madame's real contribution to medicine was a prophecy that has since come gloriously true. "An eel must have a thinner skin than other beasts," she writes in 1697, "because with the microscope one can see the circulation of their blood. It is a fine art they have discovered with these glasses. *I think it will make the doctors more learned.*"

Madame knew all about microscopes. "We had a man here called Dalancé," she writes in this same year; "he has made microscopes in which, on a knife-point covered with water and pepper, he showed me a whole lake full of soles and in the vinegar were long snakes. This same Dalancé is no longer in this country; he

is probably in Holland now, and making just such glasses, which he has doubtless improved so that one can see, and still better, things like starfish and mussels. It seems to me we know too much and too little to be perfectly happy; one knows enough to wish to know more, and not enough to rest content."

Madame had her own microscopes, — she once sent for one of the kind "in which a louse looks so big," — and conducted her own experiments. She writes in December, 1718: "The same thing was the matter with your coach and chaise as with my furs and sables: when they went to look at them they were full of moths. But as the proverb says, *à quelque chose malheur est bon*; for it diverted me very much to put the worms under my microscope. They make the microscopes very nicely indeed here; it amuses me. I have them of every kind."

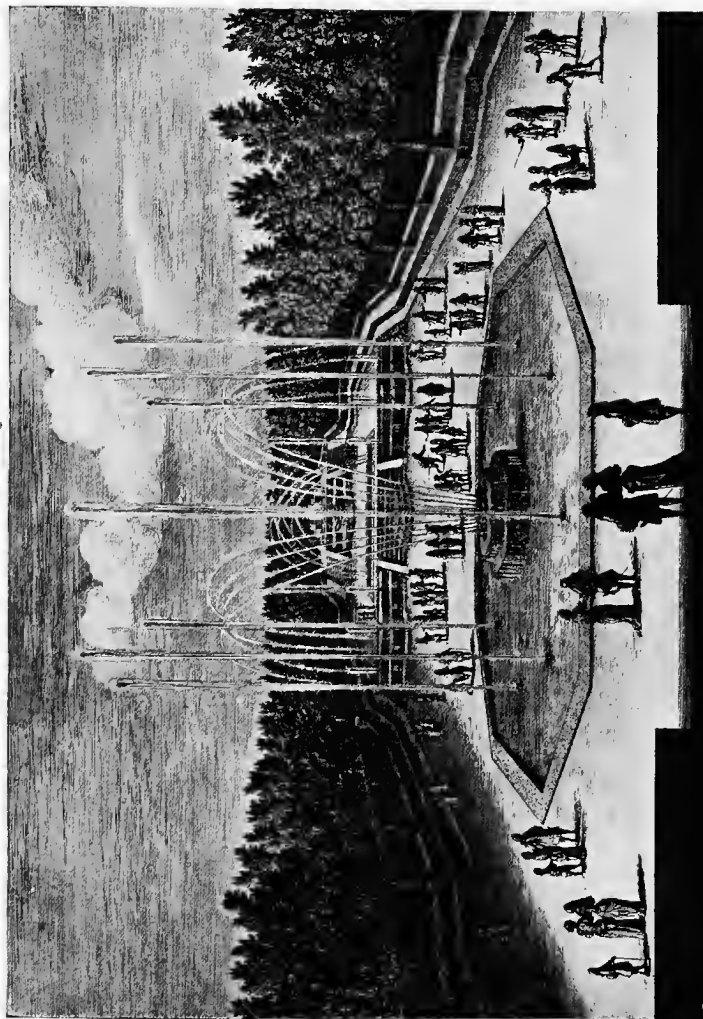
She was interested in other inventions, too. She writes in this same year: "In these six lines I have already been three times interrupted. . . . The third interruption was a man who makes things for mathematics — a gold compass, rules, and pencil, and a new invention by which one can tell how many steps one has taken in walking. It is like a watch, that is fastened to the waist and to the knee. When one walks, every tenth step is marked in a round circle; when one reaches 100, the second circle marks it; 1000, the third circle. So one can always know, without counting, how many

steps one has taken, which is said to be very convenient in sieges. It is for my little grandson who is now learning mathematics. I will give it to him, with a little tablet, at New Year's."

One of Madame's great interests was her collection of medals. She writes in 1709: "I have every reason to be grateful for the fine medals. Your Grace cannot imagine what an amusement it is for me; I spend whole days over them, and over my antique medals. Last Monday with the King's New Year's present I bought one hundred and fifty of them. I have now a cabinet of gold medals, a perfect sequence of all the emperors from Julius Cæsar to Heraclius. Not one is missing. Among these are some very rare specimens, which even the King does not possess. I got them all very cheap — two hundred and sixty of them merely for the value of their weight. I have now in all four hundred and ten gold medals. It gives me great amusement to hear the curious and the learned dispute over them, and I have all the histories on the backs of them related to me. It is right diverting." And again in 1720: "There are few antique medals that I do not possess already; for I have nearly nine hundred of them. I began with only two hundred and sixty, which I bought from Madame de Verrue, who had stolen them from the then Duke of Savoy. I at once wrote about it to the present Queen of Sardigna and offered to send them back to the King. But the box

was already mutilated — she had sold most of them. The Queen wrote she was heartily glad that the few that were left had come into my hands, and that I should keep them. I got them very cheap, only according to their weight, and yet there were some quite rare ones among them.” Madame had also a collection of engravings.

There are a hundred different subjects with regard to which, if space only permitted, one would like to quote Madame. One must not, indeed, expect any light on constitutional or legal matters; she says herself that she might just as well try to walk up a perpendicular wall as endeavor to understand them. Her observations on the French in general are keen and not too flattering: “The French can talk well about gratitude, yet nothing is rarer than to see them practise it. . . . The populace is better and more reasonable than are those of good birth. . . . French people scorn one if one deals too gently with them; to keep them quite in order there must be fear and hope. . . . If the French wish something from you, they at once make gods of you and laud you to the skies; when they have nothing more to expect, they say the worst of you and show up your smallest faults. . . . It is lost labor here to try and give people pleasure; if, for instance, you give some one a finger, he is not content until he has the whole hand. It is always that way; they



THE "THREE FOUNTAINS"

always show one ingratitude for not giving them the whole. . . . All Frenchmen, whoever they are, have this about them: they always think one must be charmed with them. I have known some who were ugly as the devil, and who yet thought that they were pleasing. I have often laughed over it heartily. . . . I have no ambition, no wish to govern anything and should find no satisfaction in doing so. Yet that is the one affair of French women. No kitchenmaid here doubts but that she has intelligence enough to run the whole kingdom, and that they are doing her the greatest wrong in the world in not asking her advice. That has put me out of conceit with all ambition, for I find something so absurd in it that it fills me with horror. . . . It is impossible to believe that there is a French woman who does not put French manners above everything and try to meddle with everything. This goes all the way from the first lady to the kitchenmaid."

With regard to fashions Madame has much to say, and it is interesting to note that in those days England seems to have given the tone to France, and Paris to Versailles. Madame writes in 1715: "Advise me what to send the Princess of Wales that would be agreeable to her. The bagatelles one has here, such as little boxes, watches, etc., are to be found prettier and better in England. I can send no more fashions, because in England they have their own, which are now being fol-

lowed here; so I am very much troubled as to what to send the dear Princess." And again in the following year, "The misfortune is that in England they have everything better than we have here."

Of the fashions Madame writes in 1706: "All the women in Paris wear such low-necked dresses that it disgusts me. . . . No one has ever seen it so bad. They all look as if they had come out of the mad-house. If they took the greatest pains to make themselves repulsive, they could not look worse. I do not wonder that the men despise the women. . . . The women, at present, are quite too despicable with their dress, their drinking, and their snuff, which makes them smell horribly. . . . At court the fashions are not yet as crazy as in Paris, where they get themselves up as though they had escaped from a lunatic asylum. They are bad enough to frighten children to bed with."

Madame has in general an antipathy to her own sex. "Girls are a weed," she writes, "that it is difficult to root out, and it always seems to me you find ten women folk to one man. . . . My God, Louisa dear, a woman's position is so unhappy that one should easily be consoled when a little girl dies: it saves there being one more unhappy creature in the world." She declares that it would have been fortunate had her son lost his eldest three daughters in their youth.

Of the snuff habit Madame writes more in detail:

"Nothing in the world is more disgusting to me than taking snuff; it makes ugly noses, makes one talk through the nose, and smell horribly. . . . Our King, not to compare us, likes it just as little; yet all his children and grandchildren take it, in spite of knowing that it displeases the King. It is better to take none than a little; for he who takes a little soon comes to take much. They call it the *herbe enchantée* for the reason that it is so attractive to those who take it that they cannot get along without it. So look out for yourself, dear Louisa."

The reader probably does not care to hear at any great length how diamond buckles are worn on the men's hats to fasten the feathers, but aigrettes with diamonds are not worn on the hats; how the fashion with regard to strings of pearls has changed, and they now twine them twice around the neck, cross them on the breast, and let two great tassels of pearls hang to the stomach, the tops of the tassels being made of larger pearls than the rest; how diamond crosses are worn not for devoutness, but for show; how Madame wears black silk aprons with two pockets when she is *en manteau*, but wears none when she is *en grand habit*; how ladies ride astraddle in the provinces, but how the King himself says they have never ridden that way at court; how the Duchesse de Bourgogne has received a dress from Spain of an entirely new pattern, with iron hoops in the

underskirt which "grow narrower and narrower, making the waist look very small."

But there is one matter to which, in concluding this part of our subject, it may be as well to refer. Madame writes, on October 10, 1711: "When some one is put into the Bastile, no one knows of it either at court or in the city. Stranger yet: a man was for years in the Bastile who died there with a mask on. He had always two musketeers on each side, to shoot him dead in case he took off the mask. He ate and slept with his mask on. He must have been somebody, for otherwise they treated him very well. He was well lodged and given everything he desired. He took the communion masked, was very devout, and read the whole time. Never could one learn who the man was."

And again, ten days later: "I have now learned who the man in the mask was who died in the Bastile. It was not barbarism that he was so masked. It was an English lord who was concerned in the affair of the Duke of Berwick against King William. He died this way in order that King William should never know what had become of him. They have the bad habit here of seldom telling people what they have against them, and allowing them no defence."



LOUIS XIV



CHAPTER VII

THE TRAGIC ENDING OF AN ERA

IN 1710 Madame had one great satisfaction: the marriage of her eldest granddaughter to the Duc de Berry. She describes the way in which the announcement was made to her: "I sat writing at my window to the Queen of Spain and Madame de Savoie. All at once the Duchesse de Bourgogne and her husband came jumping into the room with all their ladies and cried out, 'Madame, we are bringing you the Duc de Berry, for the King has just declared publicly that he is to marry Mademoiselle. . . .' To the Duc de Berry I said, 'Come and let me kiss you, for you are now more than ever what Madame the Dauphiness called you.' She had called him my Berry, *le Berry de Madame*. . . . The very next day I went to Madame de Maintenon to

thank her, for she has acted very well indeed in this affair. She was right merry that day, and our conversation did not languish."

It is strange that Madame should have been so much affected by this match. The Duc de Berry had been very much in her bad graces of late. She complains bitterly in 1708 of his familiarity with the Duchesse de Bourgogne's ladies "who know how to conduct themselves about as well as if they came from a cow stable, and treat him like a lackey." We hear elsewhere that they talk to him in a very improper tone of familiarity, one saying, "Berry, go fetch me my work!" another, "Berry, my scissors!" "He no longer knows who he is," continues Madame, ". . . he learns nothing but how to laugh at people without reason, and how to play stingily and be backward in paying, which is very unbecoming in a man of his extraction." About the same time she complains that Madame de Maintenon's clique has estranged from herself the Duc de Berry, "whom I loved as my own child." In the next year she complains again of his familiarity with the ladies in waiting: "He stands, or sits on a little stool, while all the young ladies lie across arm-chairs or on lounges. . . . He himself knows so little who he is that if he finds any one showing him respect, he is perfectly nonplussed and . . . thinks they are making fun of him."

Of Madame de Berry she writes in the year after the wedding: "She [the Duchesse de Berry] has a short fat body, long arms, short hips, walks badly, and is ungraceful in everything she does. She makes frightful grimaces, has a weepy face, ruined by the small-pox, and red eyes, light blue inside. She has a very red complexion, and looks much older than she really is. What is perfectly beautiful about her is her neck, hand, and arm; they are very white and well formed. Her feet and ankles are very pretty, too; I can't imagine why she wiggles so when she walks. With all this her husband and father think that Helena was not so beautiful as the Duchesse de Berry."

It develops in time that the person whom Madame de Berry fears and respects the most is Madame herself, so the latter is formally intrusted by the King with the task of keeping the somewhat wayward Princess in order. Madame writes in full of one great sermon she has given her, and again, in 1712: "Our Duchesse de Berry is madder and naughtier than ever. Yesterday she tried to talk back to me, but I gave her a good piece of my mind. She came all decked out in full dress, with more than fourteen *poinçons* of the finest diamonds in the world. That was all right, but she had twelve *mouches* on her face, which was horribly unbecoming. As she came in front of me I said: 'Madame, you look finely, but I think you have too many *mouches*; that looks

too undignified. You are the first lady in this land; that calls for more gravity than to be *mouched* up like the actors on the stage.' She pursed up her mouth and said, 'I know you dislike *mouches*, but I approve of them and intend to suit myself.'" Madame's lecture concluded: "When I tell you what I think, it is for your own good, and I do it because it is my duty as your grandmother, and because the King orders me."

* * * * *

But it is time to see how the King had been faring all this time.

Things had gone badly for him in the war. The French lost the battles of Blenheim, Turin (at which latter battle Madame's son commanded), Ramillies, and Malplaquet. After Blenheim Madame sadly enumerates those of her ladies and of her acquaintances who have lost their only sons. "One sees nothing but bereaved people, which is quite pitiful," she writes. "War is a horrible thing. . . . What happened at Blenheim is well worth singing a *Te Deum* over in Germany. . . . They do not belittle this battle here at all, but confess openly that it is lost, and that Tallard was beaten because the cavalry did not do its duty. . . . Here they are too sad to sing, and not a single song has been written against Monsieur Tallard, though he merits it more than some others. . . . The whole court, almost, is in mourning. Madame de Cornuel used to say, 'The *Te Deum* of



THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH

the great prince is often the *de profundis* of the ordinary person.'"

In the year of Malplaquet she writes: "There is no laughing about anything any more; everything here is growing very earnest. The King has sent all his gold plate to the mint [all the silver furniture had long since been melted down]: gold dishes set with diamonds and rubies, very beautiful; a *nef* in which the napkins are put, which is the finest work the eye could look upon, — all that is to be melted up. I am especially sorry about the *nef*. There is a fine crown on it of diamonds and beautiful rubies. It makes one moralize terribly." This was the *nef* to which the courtiers bowed in passing, and its destruction must indeed have seemed to Madame a symbol of the King's departing glory.

"In my lifetime," she writes again, "I have never seen such sad times as now. The common people are dying like flies from cold and poverty; every class of people are sad and have lost this year either friends or relatives. Every one [at court] dines and lives apart; there is no more holding court except at supper, where no one opens his mouth. . . ."

It was at this juncture that Louis XIV bent his pride to the extent of sending an envoy to demand of the Dutch their probable conditions for peace. Galling as these were, the Duc de Beauvilliers, in a council of war at Versailles, painted the miseries of France in such

colors that the Duc de Bourgogne burst into tears, and the whole council followed suit. It was determined to make peace at almost any price, and one of the ministers, Torcy, was despatched to treat directly with the Duke of Marlborough, with Prince Eugene, and with the Grand Pensionary of Holland. Torcy found that the terms previously offered were merely illusory. He was prepared to make enormous sacrifices, but to one demand he could not and would not yield: that Louis, namely, should make war against his own grandson and drive him out of Spain. Louis exclaimed when he heard the proposition, "If I have to make war, I had rather make it against my enemies than against my own children!"

Madame for once expresses herself vehemently on questions of state policy. She thinks it better to waste away and die than submit to such shame, and does not see how any one could ever imagine that Louis could consent: "The insolence of Eugene and Marlborough will surely be punished, and pride is going before a fall. . . . It is abominable and unprecedented that they should wish to compel a grandfather to make war against his own grandson, who assumed the crown of Spain through mere obedience. They seem not to wish peace."

Madame had known personally the chief actors in the war. Of Prince Eugene of Savoy she writes as follows in 1710: "Prince Eugene's merits have grown in Ger-

many like his hair, for when he was here, one saw no trace of them. Quite the contrary; he was nothing but a dirty, very dissipated boy who gave no promise of amounting to anything. I can perfectly truly assure your Grace of that."

Again in 1712: "They do not seem to think Prince Eugene so ugly in London as they do in Holland. If bravery and intelligence make a hero, Prince Eugene is certainly a hero; if other virtues are needed, there might be a discrepancy. In his Madame Simone and Madame l'Ancienne days he was looked upon here as a little *salop*. At that time he wanted a benefice bringing in only 2000 thalers; it was refused him on account of his horrible debauchery. So he went off to the imperial court, where he made his fortune. His diamond sword, which Queen Anne gave him, must be the best thing about him."

And still again in 1720: "Prince Eugene I should not have recognized from his portrait; for when he was here he had a short snub nose, and in the engraving they make him a long pointed nose. His nose was so snubby that he always kept his mouth open, and one saw the whole of the two large front teeth. I know him very well; I often plagued him when he was still a child. They wanted him to enter the church; he was dressed like an abbé. But I always assured him that he would not remain one, and so it turned out. When

he left off the clerical dress, the young people called him nothing but Madame Simone, and Madame l'Ancienne, for they pretended that he often acted the lady with young people. So you see, dear Louisa, that I know Prince Eugene very well. I knew his whole family: father, mother, brothers, sisters, uncles, and aunts; so he is not at all unknown to me and cannot possibly have acquired a long pointed nose. Madame la Duchesse d'Orleans says perhaps his teeth have fallen out, and that has pulled down his snub nose. I don't know whether that is possible."

Of Marlborough she writes in 1710: "Lord Marlborough is, as I see, more miserly than Seigneur Harpagon [in Molière's *Avare*]. I have not spoken much with him, but I have seen him twice in this country. At that time he had a fine figure and face, and did not look at all like a miser, for he was well and magnificently dressed and had quite fine wigs."

And again in 1712: "I think, as I have often said, that Queen Anne was right to punish Marlborough; his wife and he were quite too insolent to the Queen. But Parliament ought to reward him, for he did good service. Stinginess is not punishable unless one steals."

While the war was still going on, there fell upon Louis XIV a perfect avalanche of other misfortunes. Retribution had at last come for all the evil the proud King had done; a blight withered the house of Bourbon.



PRINCE EUGENE OF SAVOY

In 1711 the Dauphin was stricken with the small-pox. Madame writes, while still under the excitement, that she has been roused from her bed at midnight by one of her ladies announcing that the Dauphin was dying at his palace at Meudon; that the King at that very moment was driving through Versailles to Marly, having, as was the custom of the court, fled the house of death. "A moment later," writes Madame, "they said it was all over, that the Dauphin was dead. Your Grace can readily imagine what a dreadful state of terror this produced. I, too, ordered my coaches and quickly dressed again. I ran straight across to the Duchesse de Bourgogne, where I came on a piteous spectacle. The Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne were perfectly overwhelmed; they were pale as death and said not a single word. The Duc and Duchesse de Berry lay on the floor with their elbows on a sofa and shrieking to be heard three rooms off." Saint-Simon, who saw Madame as she hurried to the Duchesse de Bourgogne's room, makes merry over her punctiliousness in being in a long-trained dress, *en grand habit*, for fear she might meet the King. But it is evident from her own words that she caught up the garments she had just taken off; moreover, she tells us once that she has no other dresses in the world but her *grand habit* and her hunting costume.

She drove the next morning to see the King at Marly. "He is in a state of sorrow," she writes, "that would

move a stone to pity; and yet he is not irritable, but speaks to every one quite gently. . . . I bear the misfortune quite calmly and am only worried about the King. . . . They have told me how we are to treat the new Dauphin, the former Duc de Bourgogne. He is not to be simply *Monseigneur*, as his father was, but in speaking to him he is to be called *Monsieur*, and in speaking of him *Monsieur le Dauphin*. But in writing he is to be addressed as *Monseigneur*. . . . All Paris and the provinces are in despair over this death. It must have been a truly horrible poison that killed the poor man, for I was told yesterday that as he died a black fume was seen to come out of his mouth, from which his whole face turned and remained pitchy black."

The Dauphin's putrid corpse was hurried away to St. Denis with what many considered unseemly haste. Baron de Breteuil, one of the King's household, assures us that the workman who made the coffin, finding it too narrow, knelt on the Dauphin's stomach and worked the body into place with his knees. Eventually, indeed, two great ceremonies were held, one in St. Denis and one in Notre Dame de Paris.

Before a year was over another great blow fell on the court. This time it was the Duchesse de Bourgogne. "We are here in great grief," writes Madame, "for night before last the poor Dauphiness died. I cannot look at the King without tears coming into my eyes.

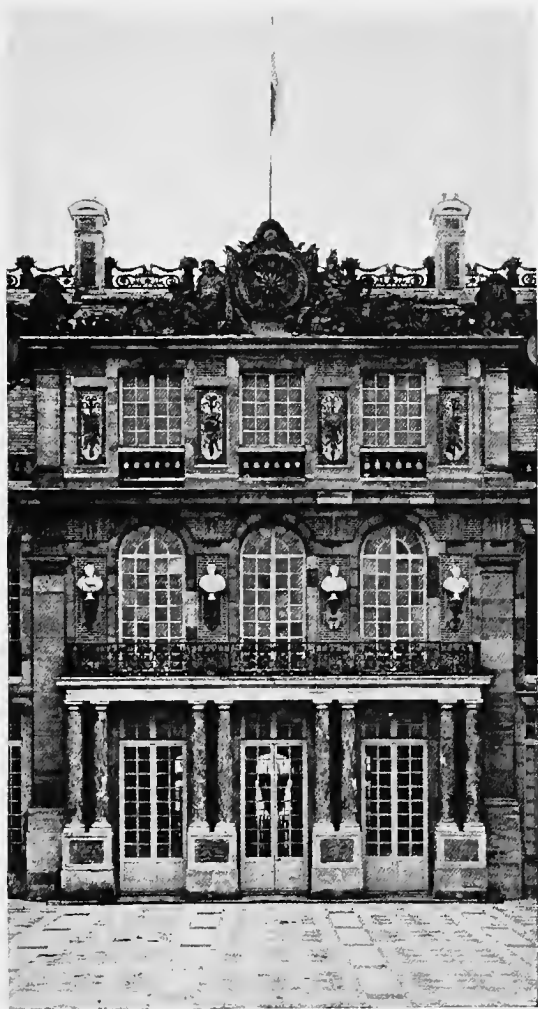
She was his sole companion and pleasure. . . . One can truly say that, save for Madame de Maintenon, the King loses all he has loved most in this world. With the Dauphiness all his joy and delight are gone."

Of the new Dauphin Madame writes, "He is young, he will marry again." But she was mistaken. He loved his wife with a love such as the walls of Versailles had never witnessed — certainly not between those who were joined in wedlock. He was ill himself when his wife died, but he rose from his bed, dressed without the aid of his valet, threw a great cloak over him, left his apartment by a back door, crossed the basement and the *cour de marbre* with his head down and his face concealed in his cloak, entered a coach, and was driven to Marly, where he shut himself in his room. The King came and was admitted, but it was too painful, and he soon left; then the courtiers came and filed past as he sat in an arm-chair by the side of his bed. Not a word was spoken; all merely bowed their heads. Within a week he followed his wife to the grave. His illness was measles, but at the last he was seized with a fit of madness, and it took eight men to hold him down. Then his mind cleared, and he passed away in a sort of religious ecstasy.

Madame writes on the day of his death: "I thought to write your Grace of nothing sadder than the mournful rite we had to perform yesterday at Versailles. But

we are overwhelmed by yet a new calamity; for the good Dauphin has followed his wife and died this morning at half-past eight. . . . The Dauphin surely died of grief. . . . They opened the good man and found him perfectly decayed, the heart withered and flat; hence they judged that he had died of grief. The loss has infinitely affected his Majesty. . . . The sadness that reigns here is indescribable. . . . I really believe that all of us here are about to die off one by one."

The Dauphin left two sons. When the governess of the elder one called him *Monsieur le Dauphin*, — it is Madame who relates it, — "he shuddered and looked at her pitifully; 'Mamma,' for so he called her, 'don't give me that name, it is too sad.'" Within a week the little fellow and his brother were down with the measles; a fortnight later the third Dauphin was dead. Madame was always sure that he, as well as his mother, was a victim of the doctors' unalterable faith in bleeding. The Duchesse de Ventadour, governess of the last little Bourbon prince to remain alive, had been one of Madame's ladies and had imbibed her antipathy to bleeding. Madame writes: "Yesterday, because the child had a high fever, they wanted to bleed him too; but Madame de Ventadour and the Prince's *sous gouvernante*, Madame de Villefort, opposed the doctors strongly and would not permit it at all. All they did was to keep him nice and warm. This one, thank God, to the shame of the



THE KING'S BALCONY

doctors, has been saved. He would surely have died had the doctors been allowed to have their way." It was found later that the high fever had come from cutting a tooth.

Madame writes in connection with these deaths that the King's grief is so great it makes her tremble; that her heart aches at seeing his efforts to force back the pain; that against his will the tears come to his eyes, and one can see that he is suffering inwardly. There was no longer any barrier between them; she was admitted freely to the "holy of holies" and did her best to keep him from thinking of sad things. "We talk a great deal of the past," she writes, "but no word about the present nor of war or peace; nor do we speak of the three Dauphins or the Dauphiness. If he begins about it, I suddenly talk of something else, as though I had not heard. . . . I burst out with all sorts of trifles; but it is hard to bring up anything diverting when calamity follows so fast on calamity. Sometimes I really do force a smile."

Madame even softens toward Madame de Maintenon for a moment: "Although the old woman is our worst enemy, yet for the King's sake I wish her a long life. Things would be ten times worse were the King to die now. He loves the woman so terribly much that he would certainly follow her to the grave; so I hope she may still live a great many years."

Madame has her own sorrows at this time that were worse, she says herself, than all the deaths in the royal family, and soon she becomes convinced that Madame de Maintenon is largely responsible for them.

Persistent rumors are spread that Madame's son Philip has poisoned all the Dauphins. She writes that his enemies "try to make him odious in Paris and at court and spread the cry of poison. . . . No one dies at court but what they lay it to him." The King stood by Philip, but in the latter's own interest, ordered an investigation and decided that Philip's chemist, Homberg, who was supposed to have provided him with the mysterious poisons, should be sent to the Bastile. Before he even reached there the case was dropped, for the doctors had reported that there was no trace of poison in the corpses. Madame writes in May, 1715, "My son was not content with proving his innocence, but he has had all the evidence placed before the *parlement* to be preserved there."

Madame had written some years previously: "In the Palais Royal my son has fitted up a whole apartment under the grand apartment as a laboratory. His delight, too, is to melt metals with the burning glass. I imagine this keeps him in Paris as often as his brown lady-love. When he comes from his laboratory, he does not look badly at all. There is a Saxon, born in India, who makes experiments with him. He is very intelligent; his name is Homberg."

Coupled with the charge of poisoning was an almost worse one, that of incest. Madame writes: "Your Grace can well imagine that it is not pleasant for me to know that they put up placards on the Palais Royal with: 'Here is where the lotteries take place and where one finds the best poison.' The 'lotteries' means that my son lives with his daughter as Lot did. . . . We know, alas, that he says wrong things when he has been drinking, but what they wrote to Germany about him he certainly did not say. What he did say was not very suitable, either; for when asked at table why he loved his eldest daughter [the Duchesse de Berry] better than all his other children, they say he answered that it was because she was the only one of his wife's children of whom he could be sure that it was his own daughter. That is, indeed, an impertinent way of speaking." Madame writes elsewhere that her son "has eaten like a wolf with his daughter and drunk still more, as unfortunately always happens there"; and again, with regard to Madame de Berry and her sister, that "in the matter of drink alone it would kill any ten men who tried to imitate them."

The King rallied from the blows of every kind that had fallen upon him. He followed the hunt, driving his own four horses. One of these fell over a precipice at Fontainebleau, but he was able to control the other three. Under the régime of Madame de Berry, who was now first lady, the court even unfolded unheard-of magnificence, the balls

at Versailles lasting sometimes until eight in the morning. She instituted what we should call coach parades, as many as a hundred coaches making the tour of the grand canal at Fontainebleau. Of her own *calèche* the wheels, the dash-board, and the harness blazed with gold. Her rich dress was covered with diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, while her head is described as literally too dazzling to behold. "Even imagination could go no further," writes the *Mercure de France*, in connection with all this magnificence.

The Duc de Berry showed himself less able to fill his position than was the case with his wife. On a formal occasion, his renunciation of the crown of Spain which was one of the conditions of the Utrecht peace, he covered himself with confusion by rising to deliver a speech which Saint-Simon had written for him, but of which he was unable to utter more than the opening "Monsieur." This he repeated several times, his air of distress exciting general compassion. It had to be taken for granted, finally, that the speech had been made. He seems to have been of a too nervous disposition and distinguished himself once, while hunting, by putting a charge of shot into the eye of *Monsieur le Duc*. The lead could not be extracted, we are told; the wound swelled, and all that the doctors could do was to bleed the patient three times and talk of dissolving the eye, which finally went out of itself. It was rash to hunt



MADAME PRESENTING THE SAXON PRINCE TO THE KING

with the Duc de Berry; pensions were being paid to five persons whom he had accidentally crippled.

The Duc de Berry's death in 1714 added one more to the tragedies in the royal house. He had given himself an internal injury while suddenly pulling up his horse, and the bleedings that the doctors gave him did not improve matters. "We have here our Duc de Berry horribly and dangerously ill," writes Madame, on May 4, ". . . I have just come from his Grace's room; they have bled him again for the eighth time. . . . I fear more than I can say that it will turn out badly." And again, after two days: "I prophesied only too truly . . . for the poor man died Friday at four in the morning. . . . The King himself brought the holy sacrament; we were all at this sad ceremony, which lasted three-quarters of an hour. One cannot conceive of anything more sad. It is heart-rending." But all the same she writes soon after, "Had the Duc de Berry continued to love me, nothing could have consoled me for his death; but since he had changed towards me so much that I am sure if I had died, he would only have laughed, I too have consoled myself."

Seeing the fate of France dependent on one feeble life, Louis had his sons by Madame de Montespan declared next in succession to the throne!

If the fêtes ceased, the ceremonies continued and Madame was now much in evidence. It was she who, when the son

of the Elector of Saxony came to France in 1714, formally presented him to the King. The Duchesse de Berry in her widow's weeds of black and ermine stood by, and the occasion was considered of sufficient importance for one of the court painters to paint the scene.

Madame herself writes: "They rendered my speech wrong, for I never in my life called the King 'sire,' but 'sir.' The *enfants de France* never call the King 'sire'; that begins with the *petits enfants*. What I did say to the King was, 'Sir, here is the Electoral Prince of Saxony who wishes me to present him to your Majesty.' The Prince stepped up with a right lofty and good mien and paid his respects to the King without the least embarrassment. By this he at once gained the approval of the King and of the whole court, and the King answered him very politely." The King, furthermore, presented him with a jewelled sword, the chief diamond on which alone was worth 10,000 thalers.

In June, 1714, Madame's aunt, the Electress Sophia, was struck down by apoplexy and died almost immediately. Madame was more affected by this death than by any of the tragedies that had taken place in France. "Through her gracious letters," she writes, "this dear Electress relieved me of many a sorrow and sadness of heart that had fallen on me in this land. . . . The tears will cease, but my inward pain and grief will endure to the end. I forget, dear Louisa, if I wrote you how I

heard of this misfortune, and how they caused it to be announced to me through my father confessor. A trembling came over me, as when one has a chill with a high fever. I grew pale, too, as death. I was a good quarter of an hour without weeping; but my breath failed me, and I seemed to be suffocating. Then the tears came in floods and lasted day and night. . . . You are right in saying that this awful news has pierced me through heart and soul."

But she has to continue to take part in the doings of the court. "What I endure day and night," she writes, "is impossible for me to describe; and I have the added torture of having to control myself; for the King cannot endure sad faces."

In August Madame writes to her half-sister: "I imagine you will already have heard that Queen Anne has had a stroke. They think here that she is dead. It made me think anew of our dear dead Electress. Had she lived three months longer she would have died a queen. What strange things happen in the world!"

Madame was not pleased by the attitude towards herself of the new King of England, though just what her grievance was is not clear. She writes in January, 1715: "I must confess the King of England makes me impatient when he shows so little consideration for his late mother, as to treat those whom she loved and who are so nearly related to him with such scorn. I, too, am of the number.

. . . I don't know whence the scorn comes, for were I a Protestant, he could not have been king. For I was nearer to the crown than he, and it is only through my family and his dear dead mother's that he is King. . . . But I see plainly that he wishes to have nothing to do with me, so one must console oneself for this misfortune."

* * * * *

To return to the ceremonies at the French court, a most extraordinary one took place early in 1715. It was the reception of a Persian ambassador who came to lay at the King's feet the homage of the Orient.

On the day of the reception the King first stood on his balcony and watched the entry of the envoy into the court-yard of the palace, then returned, crossed the *Œil de bœuf*, and proceeded down the *Galerie des glaces*, along one whole side of which sat brilliantly attired ladies. Seeing that they showed great eagerness to scrutinize his magnificent costume, — the coat was of black and gold, and around his neck hung the *cordons bleus* with all the jewels of the crown, — he had the politeness, we are told, to walk slowly and to pass very close to the ladies, indeed. At the end of the *Galerie* was his throne, around which were grouped Madame, the Duchesse de Berry, the princesses, and all their ladies. On his right he placed the tiny Dauphin; the latter was kept from running away by the Duchesse de Ventadour, who held his leading-strings;



THE EMBASSY FROM THE ORIENT

he, too, gleamed all over with precious stones. Madame's son was on the King's left. At the King's feet was the painter Coypel, who had been ordered to immortalize the scene.

Madame describes the ambassador as "the craziest person you could possibly imagine," and as brandishing his sword and threatening to kill every one when a suggestion was made that he did not like. He eventually distinguished himself by abducting a Frenchman's wife. She was put in a box, which was provided with air-holes, and was sent off with the rest of his luggage.

Saint-Simon maintains that the whole embassy from Persia was a trick arranged by the King's ministers to give pleasure to their senile master. At all events it was the latter's last glimpse of glory.

He dismissed the envoy with gifts of great value — diamonds, emeralds, clocks, watches, guns, pistols, and tapestries — and then took to his bed, never to rise from it again. He died of a sort of spreading gangrene; for a time it was confined to his leg, and the doctors hoped it would not pass the garter mark. He himself had no illusions, but spoke of the time "when I was King," and thanked God for making him a descendant of St. Louis and giving him so long a reign. He had a most touching last interview with Madame, telling her he had always loved her more than she could possibly imagine, and

that he was sorry for all the pain he had caused her. "He said farewell to me with such tender words," she writes, "that I am still astonished myself that I did not faint dead away." She threw herself on her knees at his bedside, and he gave her a fond embrace.

After the King's case was regarded as hopeless, a quack was admitted who promised to cure him with a certain elixir. One day there was wild rejoicing because the King had evidently gained in strength. There was talk of throwing the regular physicians into the Seine. Then the gangrene passed the garter mark, and the leg, we are told, "was as rotted as though the King had been dead for six months." He said nothing to those around him, but muttered frequently: "My God, have pity on me! Why, Lord, dost Thou not take me? I am ready to appear before Thee!" Once he swooned, was considered dead, and Madame de Maintenon hastily fled the palace forever — a day too soon. He revived, but was like a piece of mechanism out of order. To make him take food his jaws were opened by force; his hands had to be held to prevent their aimlessly beating the air. In the evening came a last surprise. While the almoners were chanting the prayer for those in agony the last live chord of memory was touched, and the King, merely from habit, broke out with the *Ave Maria* and the *Credo* in tones more resounding than those of the priests themselves. The next



THE PERSIAN ENVOY

morning the King's life ended, quietly and peacefully as a flame flickers and goes out. Then Madame's son drew the princes of the blood around him, fell on his knees before the little Dauphin, calling him "Sire" and "Majesty" and kissing his hand. Then a high official, putting on a helm with black plumes, stepped on to the balcony and cried three times to the surging crowd, *Le Roi est mort!* Then changing his helm to one with white plumes, he cried three times more, *Vive le Roi!*

Madame at this time, besides her grief for the King, has a secret sorrow, too terrible, she writes, for her to intrust to paper. "The blood they took from me to-day is but melancholy blood," she writes to her half-sister; "if you knew the details, you would wonder that I can live. To one so virtuous as you, dear Louisa, it cannot be written by post. If you knew all, your hair would stand up on end!" And again, in answer to rumors (about what she does not say): "Would God I could have assured her positively that it was not true! Perhaps we don't exactly understand each other. What I mean is no habit, for passions are stronger than habits, and also cause more disaster. But it makes one's life bitter and wearisome!"

The funerals of each and all of these poor royalties whom we have seen die were celebrated, of course, with the greatest pomp. As a rule the body was soon removed from the palace; but if the master of ceremonies, Sainctot,

can be believed, a wax figure was then placed in the bed and served with food and drink for forty days.

The portion of the palace occupied by the defunct would be hung with cloth and velvet in the most complete manner imaginable, the ceilings, the walls, the windows, and doors, and even the steps, being covered entirely. Day and night priests chanted dirges or said mass, — as many as sixty masses being said in a day. All the great people, in immensely long black trailing garments, made solemn visits to sprinkle the body with holy water. The King's own train, when in formal mourning, was four and a half feet long, and the *crêpe* on his hat hung down as far as the ground. He put on black for his family, but violet for foreign rulers.

Out of respect for a vow made by Anne of Austria in 1662 when she founded Val de Grace, the heart of a French royal personage was cut out of the body, placed in a silver box, and carried to that convent at dead of night. Madame de Montespan, having tortured the Queen's heart during her lifetime, rode to Paris in the coach with it after her death. Madame writes in 1714 that she cannot bear to go near Val de Grace: "For opposite their choir is a chapel in which are the hearts of Monsieur, of my eldest son, of the Queen, the Dauphiness, and the three Dauphins, as well as of the Duc de Berry. They are enclosed in silver hearts; over them hangs a black veil and a crown over the veil. The sight is to me absolutely

unendurable. I should weep myself ill. So I am very careful not to go to this convent."

The body itself was taken to St. Denis. The processions were begun at night by the light of thousands of torches and to the sound of slow-beating drums. But they might last for ten or twelve hours. The pall was of cloth of gold bordered with ermine, and on the cloth of gold was a cross of cloth of silver, while above rested a crown of gold. The horses that drew the coaches were caparisoned with black velvet falling to the ground, and the livery of the coachmen was of the same.

Arrived at the church of St. Denis, the body was deposited in a receiving vault, richly decorated, but with emblems of death everywhere. It was guarded by the officers of the household day and night.

After forty days came the funeral itself in the nave of the church where a great catafalque was erected. In the case of the first Dauphiness this was on an estrade to which one ascended by nine steps. Above was a dome help up by eight columns and lighted with a circle of lamps. On each of the steps were gorgeous candelabra of silver, containing numberless wax candles. Between the pairs of columns were gigantic figures of the four cardinal virtues, while attached to the ceiling above the dome were a superb banner and four great black streamers lined with ermine, their ends being caught up. All around the church were skulls and crossbones illumined by tapers.

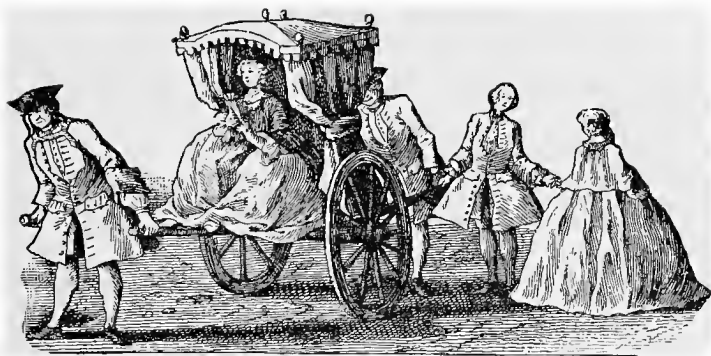
In the case of Louis XIV there were great cartoons representing his splendid deeds. The services lasted all the way from four to seven hours, and the whole proceedings, both those that were premeditated and sometimes those that were not so, were extraordinary enough. We have a detailed description by Saint-Simon of the funeral of the first Dauphiness. The court did not arrive until the whole assembly had been seated and all the candles lighted. Then twenty-four ringers began to clang the bells; both sides of the great doors were thrown open, and Madame, as first lady, escorted by the Duc de Bourgogne, entered first. He was on her left hand because the defunct was a princess; had it been a prince, Madame would have been on his left. The Duc de Bourgogne's train was five feet long, but at the funeral of the first Dauphin the trains of the Duc de Bourgogne, of the Duc de Berry, and of Madame's son were each twelve ells, or thirty-six feet, long and were carried by distinguished nobles. The bells clanged again as the clergy, in their most gorgeous robes, filed in. The court performed in the chancel what we might almost call a quadrille, making bows of ceremony alone, by twos and by threes, to the effigy of Louis XIII as the last King who had died, to the altar, the corpse, and to each of the principal mourners. The bow of ceremony consisted in crossing your legs and letting yourself down slowly without bending the head or the body.

Madame tells how at the Dauphiness's funeral she, as first lady, had to hand to the bishop a taper weighted with gold for the offertory. But then and there, between the monks of St. Denis and the clergy of the Dauphiness's household there broke out a fierce fight as to which should have the gold. "They scuffled and almost hit each other," writes Madame, "and broke the taper in three places. They threw themselves upon the bishop, whose chair began to totter and made his mitre fall from his head. Had I stayed there a moment longer, the bishop with all the monks would have fallen upon me. I descended the steps in great haste and looked on the battle from a safe distance. In spite of everything it was so comical that I could not but laugh, and all who were present did the same." At the funeral of the third Dauphin there was a similar fight, just as the coffin was being lowered into the vault, for the ermine and gold pall.

The last stage in each ceremony for a king or an *enfant de France* was the performance for the last time by each grand officer of the household of his own especial function and the breaking in two of their wands of office. In Louis XIV's case the crown, the oriflamme or banner of France, the mantle, the sceptre, the wand of justice, the sword, the spurs, the coat of mail, the helmet, the shield, and the escutcheon were all brought separately and solemnly laid in the vault. Then again there was the triple repetition of *Le roi est mort!* and of the other cry,

Vive Louis Quinze! In compliance with an old custom hundreds of birds were liberated as a token of joy at the accession of the new King. Like liberated birds, too, the court took their flight from Versailles.





CHAPTER VIII

THE REGENCY

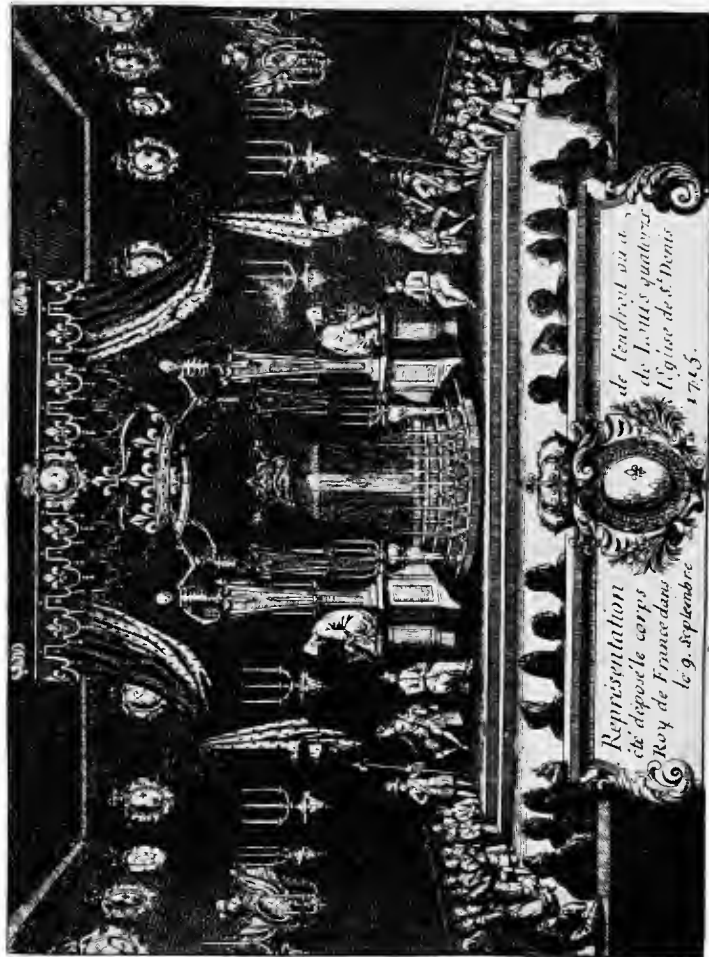
MADAME writes from Paris on September 10: "The whole royal household is scattered like starlings. The young King drove yesterday to Vincennes, Madame de Berry to St. Cloud, my son and I here, my son having first accompanied the King to Vincennes. Where all the rest have gone to, I do not know."

It was in the Palais Royal that Madame and her son took up their residence, and she writes that her son has given her a fine new apartment incomparably superior to the old one. She detests Paris, however, — mainly, one would imagine, because she is so frequently interrupted in letter-writing. "I began to write this morning at half-past ten," she says in this same first letter from Paris, "but have only been able to write the few

lines you see; for I have had so abominably many people that my whole head is turning as though I were drunk. I hardly know what I am doing or saying. It is a perfect torture to be here."

A year later she writes: "It is true that here in Paris there are more hindrances to writing in a day than in a week at Versailles. Yesterday I had twenty-nine German princes, counts, and nobles." And again: "There come a lot of princes now. My God, how often one is interrupted!"

In 1718 she writes: "In Paris they give one neither peace nor rest. . . . One person brings a petition, another wishes a word said for him; this one wants an audience, that one an answer. In short, I am unbearably tormented there. It is worse than ever. . . . They are very much surprised that I am not completely charmed with all this fuss about me; but I must confess it is unendurable." She is, in fact, a much more important person in Paris than she had been in Versailles, or at least has more serious duties to perform. She writes of laying a cornerstone, at which ceremony she is received with drums, trumpets, and fifes and with salvos of artillery. She sits on a raised platform in an arm-chair and with a canopy — a *daïs*, she calls it — over her, and with her own hand, smears cement on a stone. "I had to give my blessing," she writes; "that made me laugh — it's a fine thing, my blessing!"



THE RECEIVING VAULT FOR LOUIS XIV'S BODY

Madame remains very conservative amid her new surroundings. "I see many men, but no women," she writes; "they will not come to me because I cannot endure people coming quite bare-necked and in *écharpe*, like Madame d'Orleans and Madame de Berry. The young people do not know what respect means; they never saw a proper court. I confess these perfectly disorderly manners are horribly displeasing to me. In short, dear Louisa, everything is quite disgusting, and I wish I were a hundred miles away. . . . It began already in our late King's time. His Majesty said to me: 'How will you manage in Paris? Unless you put up with the ladies in *robe de chambre*, no one will come to you.' I said, 'Sir, I prefer not to have these ladies, rather than see them not render me my due.' The King said: 'You are quite right, Madame. I wish Madame d'Orleans felt the same, but she is too horribly lazy.' So I keep up what had the King's approval." She declares that the *robes battantes* seem to her absolutely insolent and remind her of night-gowns. She would make no concession, indeed, to any new fashion and would never wear a *panier*. Her outer cloak was still cut on the model of that of the first Dauphiness, who had died thirty years before. She was laced daily into her *grand habit* and would admit no one not similarly attired. She felt quite bitter about it; she hoped that the ladies might one day be made to pay dearly for their laziness. There would come a new queen who would

insist on their always being in *grand habit*, and this would be all the harder for them because of their present laxness.

Through her very conservatism Madame grew extremely popular with the Parisians. She seems to have represented to them all that was best in that monarchy which they had adored, but which, by its extravagance and dissoluteness, had forfeited much of their respect. She declares that they are grateful to her for her observance of old customs and for living according to her station; that they are wont to curse their own native princes and princesses, but that on her, when she drives through the streets, they shower nothing but blessings. "I return the pleasant feeling," she writes, "and think highly of the good people." And again: "The French are so accustomed to have women meddle in everything that it seems to them impossible I do not meddle at all; and the good Parisians, with whom I am in favor, try to ascribe everything that is good to me. I am much obliged to the poor people for their affection, which I don't in the least deserve." She does meddle more than she did formerly, especially in the case of Protestants who had suffered hardships.

Once Madame found herself in a riot in which many persons were killed. She kept right on through the crowd, because, she writes, "in such cases you must never seem to be afraid"; and no one insulted her. "Had I not loved them," she writes of the Parisians, "I should never

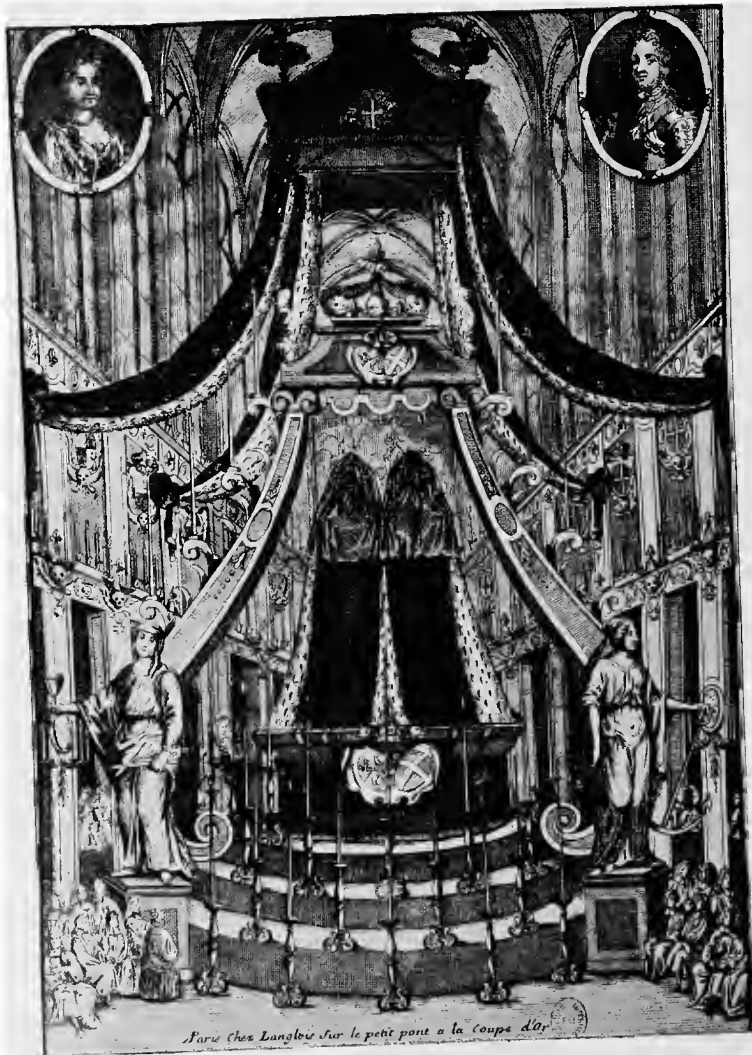
have gone to live among them. In this class you really do find people who are faithful to their wives. A servant of mine had married one of the ugliest women in the world, a woman who was broader than she was long, who had a face like a toad that has been trodden upon, and who talked exactly like a duck. Yet she has just died, and the poor man is in absolute despair."

Madame was in the midst of the excitement of the Mississippi Bubble and frequently talked with John Law. She has a host of delicious anecdotes about the *nouveaux riches*, of which, however, we can give but one specimen. "All who have won so tremendously in the shares," she writes, "buy up everything without treating or bargaining. There are comical stories. The other day when a lady was at the opera, she saw another lady come in, — very ugly, but dressed in the finest material in the world and covered with diamonds. Madame Bégon's daughter turned and said to her mother: 'Mother, look at that lady all dressed up. It seems to me it is our cook, Marie.' The mother said, 'Hold your tongue, daughter; it cannot be.' The daughter repeated, 'Mother, in the name of God look!' The mother looked at her closely and said, 'I don't know what to think; she does look very much like her.' Every one in the amphitheatre began to whisper, 'Marie, the cook!' She stood up and said in a very loud voice: 'Well, yes; I am Marie, the cook of Madame Bégon. I have grown rich; I dress on my own

money; I owe nothing to any one. I like to dress up, I do dress up. That harms no one. Who has any objections to make?' You can imagine what a burst of laughter there was. There are a hundred such stories."

Madame's son one morning increased her own income by 150,000 *livres* a year, and he distributed 2,000,000 francs' worth of shares among the officers and chief persons of her household. She is naturally wildly enthusiastic about Law. "My son has found an Englishman named Law," she writes, "who understands the finances down to the bottom. . . . Those who speak ill of Monsieur Law do it from pure envy; for nothing could be better. He pays the King's abominable debts and causes the taxes to be lowered. . . . Wood costs but half what it did. . . . Monsieur Law is a very polite, good man; I think a great deal of him. He does me favors whenever he can. . . . I always say the way things have gone under my son's regency is unprecedented. One cannot say with Solomon that there is nothing new under the sun; for what Monsieur Law is doing is brand new."

In August, 1719, Madame writes: "In the last six days nothing has happened except much concerning the finances, which I cannot tell you about, for I do not understand it. I only know that my son has found means, together with an Englishman named Monsieur Law, — but the French call him Monsieur *Las*, — to pay this year



THE FUNERAL CEREMONY FOR THE DUC AND DUCHESSE DE BOURGOGNE

all the King's debts, which amount to two hundred thousand million. So the young King from being a very poor King will become a very rich one."

Madame means 2,000,000,000 francs, which is enough, to be sure; and the Regent really did pay them, but with paper money, the security for which was undeveloped land along the Mississippi. The exploitation of this was to be rendered profitable by enormous government grants and monopolistic franchises. The military commander of those parts who came to Paris and ventured to criticise the scheme was clapped into the Bastille. Law was made Comptroller of the Finances of the kingdom, and his bank farmed the state revenues..

The Regent spent money like Haroun al Raschid, and the shares, into which all government bonds were made convertible, rose to 2000 by leaps and bounds. Gold, silver, and jewels were eagerly bought as permanent investments. The Regent himself bought for the crown a great diamond that now bears his name, but that was originally known as the "millionnaire." Madame writes, to be sure, that she has seen a finer one in the hands of a Jew belonging to the King of Poland. "I mean," she explains, "that the Jew belonged to the King of Poland, not the diamond."

"It is incredible what appalling riches there now are in France," Madame writes in December, 1719; "one hears them talk of nothing but millions." But soon again she

writes that she does not understand about the shares; that "at first one gained a great deal with them, but now one no longer gains so much." Then come edicts of which she disapproves. People seem to be trying to invest all their money in gold, silver, jewels, etc., and not to care for the paper money and shares. Dangeau writes: "It is said that foreigners have sold jewels here for more than 100,000,000 francs, and that they are preparing to have others come that they would sell very dear." Edicts then forbade the wearing of jewels, the hoarding of gold, and even the manufacturing of gold articles of any value. Then came house-to-house visitations in search of gold and silver coin, it having been declared that the paper of the government bank was good enough for any one. Saint-Simon writes sarcastically of the attempt to persuade people that "since Abraham paid cash down for a field for the burial of Sarah, men had been in the greatest error regarding money and metals, that paper alone was useful and necessary." He declares that a history of the sudden changes of fortune, the incredible bargains, the immensity of the gains, the fall of those thus enriched, the ruin, the incurable wounds inflicted on the country, would form the strangest and most amusing history ever written.

Mississippi shares went down from 2000 to almost nothing. Madame writes that she has forbidden her people to speak to her of the accursed things, that they

are as distasteful to her as a purging: "I don't know what 'rising' or 'falling' means, and I won't learn. . . . Mississippi and I have nothing to do with each other; I hate it like the devil. . . . Monsieur Law's system never pleased me; would God I had been mistaken about it. . . . I always wished my son not to follow it." Which was not quite literally true.

England, it will be remembered, was having her own similar troubles with the great South Sea Bubble. Madame writes in November, 1720, "God pardon me, but I must confess that it did not grieve me to hear about the disorders of the South Sea affair since things had gone so wrong here."

But her natural sense of humor, which, as we have seen in the preceding pages, was abnormally developed, will not permit of her keeping to herself the following anecdote. It is about the King's physician, Dr. Chirac. He "was called to see a lady, and while he was in her bedchamber and in the very act of feeling her pulse, he heard of a further fall [in the shares]. He could not refrain from moaning, 'Ah, good God! sinking, sinking, sinking!' The poor sick lady, hearing this, uttered a loud shriek; and as her people ran to her from all directions: 'Ah,' said she, 'I shall die! Monsieur de Chirac has said three times as he felt my pulse, "Sinking, sinking, sinking!"' The doctor recovered himself and said, 'You are dreaming; your pulse is quite strong, and you are perfectly well!'"

But Madame has more serious things to tell, too: of their finding at one time twenty dead bodies in her fish-pond at St. Cloud of people who had been murdered for their money. "This happens almost every night," she writes, meaning that some one is murdered daily. In July, 1720, she complains that her own purveyors refuse to provide her with food or her merchants with clothes or stockings because she has no ready money.

* * * * * *

As the years went on death, of course, grew busier and busier with those who had been at the great King's court.

The exiled Queen of England died in May, 1718. "To-day I write you with a very sad heart," says Madame, on May 8, "and I wept yesterday absolutely the whole day. For yesterday morning at seven o'clock the good, pious, virtuous Queen of England died at St. Germain. She must be in heaven, for she did not keep a farthing for herself, but gave all to the poor; she supported whole families. She never spoke ill of any one in her life, and if one wanted to tell her stories about any one, she would say, 'If it is anything bad, please don't tell me; I don't like stories that attack the reputation.' She bore her misfortunes with the greatest patience in the world, and that not from foolishness; for she had much intelligence, was polite and agreeable, although not handsome. She was always merry, laughed and chaffed in a perfect manner, and always praised our Princess of Wales very much.'



THE EXILED QUEEN OF ENGLAND

On May 29: "I never pass by Chaillot without shuddering to think that the virtuous and amiable Queen is lying up there dead in the choir of the nuns—it will be long before I get her out of my mind. . . . The Queen died with hearty joy and publicly thanked God for releasing her from this life. I am quite of your opinion, dear Louisa, that the Queen was more of a saint than her late husband. . . . The Queen had great constancy and right royal qualities, great nobility, generosity, politeness, an agreeable intelligence, was absolutely always merry, and could banter very nicely. She always bantered me with my passion for seeing plays and acknowledged that she had been so herself. She never complained, and laughed heartily because for a time she could not drive out for the reason that her horses had died, and she had no money to buy others. She laughed over her royal condition, how magnificent it was, and how all the grandeur of this world is only vanity. She knew how to turn that very prettily and without bitterness."

The "Queen of England" might well banter Madame about going to plays, for she went to everything that came along. She could enter the theatre by a private passage from the Palais Royal. She particularly loved sad plays. "*Iphigénie* is a very touching piece," she once wrote; "it has often made me weep, and if I did not find myself softened and touched by plays, I should not enjoy them at all."

Madame de Maintenon died early in 1719; Madame had just closed and sealed a letter when she heard the news; she wrote in her large firm hand across the cover: "This morning I learn that the old Maintenon went round the corner yesterday between four and five in the evening; what a blessing if this had happened thirty and some years ago!" She writes in the same strain in another letter; and one sees what, after all these years, she considers the woman's one unpardonable sin: "I fear that the Maintenon's death, like that of the Gorgon Medusa, will produce many more monsters. Had she died thirty and some years ago, all the poor Protestants ["reformed," she calls them] would still be in France, and their church at Charenton would not be razed to the ground. The 'old witch,' as the Grand Duchess used to call her, has done all that with the Jesuit Père la Chaise. . . . Those two have done all that."

Very opposite opinions were and still are held about Madame de Maintenon. Dangeau wrote in his diary in connection with her death: "She was a woman of such great merits, who had done so much good and prevented so much evil in the time of her favor, that one cannot say too much for her." But Saint-Simon wrote opposite this passage in his copy of Dangeau: "That is what I call a flat, dirty, stinking lie in the throat! This fatal woman did great harm to France . . . and caused great relief by her death."

Madame de Berry, as first lady in France, played something of a rôle under the Regency. She was magnificent in all her doings, even in her devotions. Madame declares that at the Carmelite convent where Madame de Berry went into retirement at Easter time she has seen the nuns perfectly bathed in tears because of the fervor with which her Grace went to communion. Madame has to add, however, that her granddaughter's good resolutions seldom last, and that "the devil will come back into the swept house with seven evil spirits worse than the first." Madame de Berry surrounded herself with guards, had a royal canopy placed over her box at the opera, once walked out on the quay preceded by drummers, and, once again, received ambassadors on a regular throne. Her pride and arrogance were the talk of Paris.

In 1719 Madame's daughter came back from Lorraine to visit her after an absence of twenty years. As the sister of the Regent of France she was royally received, and by way of a new and pleasant experience, was even allowed to pardon a soldier who was just about to be hung at the end of the Pont Neuf. The Duchesse de Berry outdid herself in showing her attentions.

The Duchesse de Lorraine found in her room a *commode* stuffed with rare fabrics, shawls, and ribbons such as the King had been wont to dispense. Then Madame de Berry gave her a fête in her palace, the Luxemburg, that surpassed anything seen for years. More than a thousand birds

of various kinds had been slaughtered for the collation, and each of the two hundred and fifty guests who sat down to dinner had a separate domestic to fill his or her glass. The Duchesse de Berry herself was in a robe of gold, and her head-dress glittered all over with diamonds. After the collation the brilliantly lighted palace was practically thrown open to the public, for any one properly dressed and masked might enter. It was a Belshazzar's feast, for the Duchesse de Berry was taken ill not so very long after. Madame tells us she has been to see her, that she is suffering "like a damned soul" and has no rest day or night; "they call Madame de Berry's illness gouty rheumatism."

Madame unbends enough to say of the daughter-in-law she has all these years so bitterly detested, "I am sorry for the mother, too." And she actually said of poor Madame d'Orleans one day, "To tell the truth, she is very humble towards me, and we get on very well together."

Madame de Berry's end was most edifying. Madame writes: "She said yesterday she was glad to die because she had made her peace with God, and should she live longer, she might sin again. She preferred to die. This touched us all unutterably. She really is a good creature. Had her mother taken pains to bring her up better, she would have turned out absolutely well. I confess her loss goes straight to my heart and saddens my soul."

She gives horrible details of what the doctors found when they "opened" Madame de Berry: "Her spleen was



Tee Yee Neen No Ga Roy F. Schenck del. Am.
KEYSER VANDE SES NATTEN.

One of the four Kings of India, who on 2 May 1710 were admitted by her Majesty
 Queen of Great Britain, & gave assistance against the French in America between
 New-England and Canada etc.

AN INDIAN OF MADAME'S TIME

perfectly rotted, had become like mush; her head was full of water, and half of the brain was gone." Unfortunately Madame de Berry's complete moral rottenness came to light at about the same time, and Madame writes these terrible words: "The best thing is that no one talks any more about the poor Duchesse de Berry; would God I had less reason to be consoled over her death! It is worse than you could imagine it in your life!"

Madame writes about this time: "There are many royal persons who have been badly brought up in their youth; being taught only their grandeur, but not that they are mere human beings like others, and that with all their grandeur they are nothing at all if they have not good characters and do not strive after virtue. I once read in a book that such ones are to be likened to sows with gold necklaces. That struck me as comical and made me laugh, but it is not badly said."

Madame had certainly had experience enough of evil in her life. She once said to her father confessor, who was trying to explain away the infidelities of her own son-in-law, the Duc de Lorraine, "My Father, tell that to the monks of your monastery, who see life through the neck of a bottle, but do not tell it to us people of the court." But now she really is aghast at the morals of the Regency and writes: "I wonder all France does not fall like Sodom and Gomorrah. . . . Every time there is a thunderstorm I dread the fall of Paris." She had even feared for her own

daughter's morals on coming suddenly into such a sink of iniquity, but is delighted to find that the Duchesse de Lorraine has not the least inclination to gallantry or debauchery. The visit is a pure joy. Madame writes in March, 1718: "Immediately after dinner I am going to prayers in the Carmelite convent, and when I come back I must go to the opera, where I only go in order to talk with my daughter. For we sit next to each other, and the noise of the opera prevents any one from hearing us. So the opera box is the most comfortable place for talking together. . . . What one daily hears and sees here is indescribable, and that from the highest in rank. In my daughter's time it was not the custom; she is in a state of wonder and cannot get over all that she hears and sees. Her astonishment often makes me laugh. In especial she cannot get used to seeing ladies with great names, in the middle of the opera house, lie in the laps of men who are said not to hate them. My daughter calls out to me, 'Madame, Madame!' I say: 'What can I do about it, my daughter? Those are the manners of the times.' 'But they are villainous,' says my daughter; and that is true."

Madame's letters, as time goes on, grow longer and longer. Her interest in the things about her remains very keen. Her glance even roams across the ocean. She talks of the exiles from the Palatinate who had settled in Pennsylvania, and thinks they would come back if they

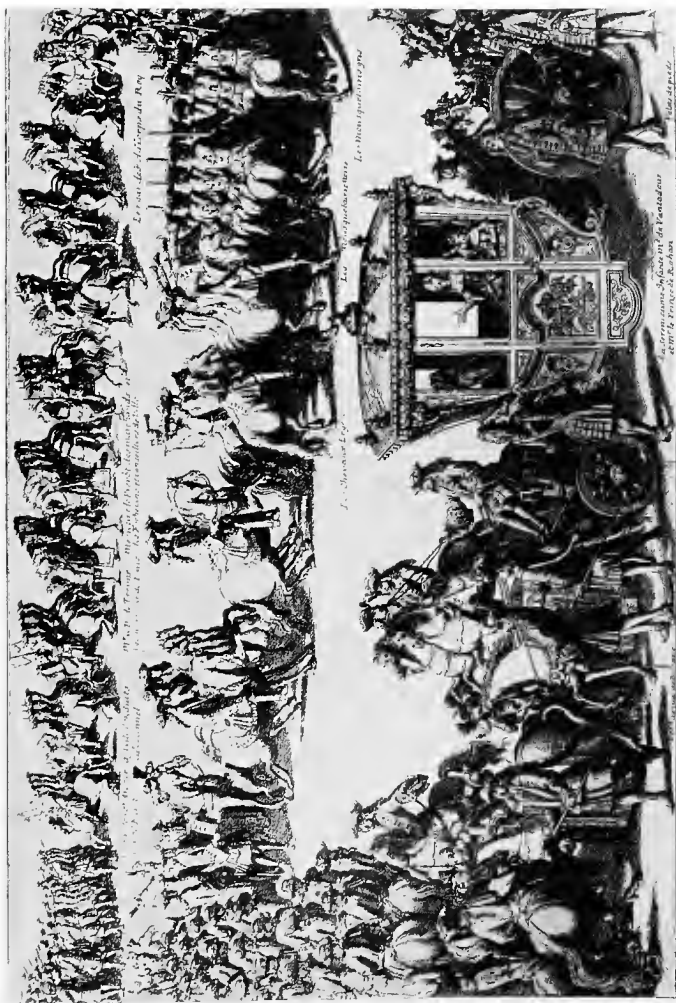
were better treated at home. She hears of an Indian prince and princess. "If they are painted with all sorts of colors," she writes, "they must be American savages. But those people have neither princes nor nobles. All are considered equal except the leaders in war. Them they obey only so long as the war continues, when they become like the rest again. We have very often some of these savages here, so I know very well what goes on among the Americans. I have a woman of the bedchamber who married a French nobleman named Longueil who has estates in Canada, and is in the royal service there. She and two of her sisters, who are now all dead, were among my women of the bedchamber; her father and her older brother were my apothecaries. She was here twenty-three years ago. She told me all about the life of their wild men; so I know it through and through, and no sea-captain had better get off any of his yarns on me."

Madame's thoughts frequently revert to the past. She tells of a visit to the country place of one of her former ladies who had grown very rich through the Mississippi shares. "She caught me finely," Madame writes; "she said to me quite dryly, 'To judge by the talk of those who come through the woods to-day, it may be well to listen; for there are people eating and drinking there, and they say there is even music.' I hurried along, believing that, as often happens, there really

were people feasting in the woods. As I came up I did, in fact, see a table set out and seven or eight fellows sitting there, eating, drinking, and singing. They rose; when they turned round, I saw that it was the violins from the King's music. Then I realized that it had all been arranged beforehand. They played, and exceptionally well. But it reminded me so much of by-gone days and of the fêtes that we had on the canal when the King and Queen were alive that the thought of it brought tears to my eyes. I must confess that music no longer makes me gay, but only brings sad memories. But come, let us talk of something else!"

No account of Madame's life would be complete without a word as to one of her most agitating experiences, the Spanish plot to remove her son from the Regency and replace him by that Philip V, second son of the Duc de Bourgogne, whom we saw in December, 1700, quitting France for his new country amid the lamentations of the court. Into the intrigues of the Spanish prime minister, Alberoni, and the negotiations regarding the Quadruple Alliance we need not enter. Alberoni had plunged Spain into a war with England, but the Regent hesitated to follow England's example, because he feared that the war would be unpopular in France. Then the so-called Cellamare conspiracy came to light, Cellamare being the ambassador of Philip V in Paris.

Madame writes in this connection in December, 1718:



THE ENTRY OF THE LITTLE INFANTA INTO PARIS

“I must tell you what my heart is quite full of, and what worries me greatly ; namely, the abominable treason they discovered last Thursday against my son. I will tell you how it came about. An English bankrupt, or one who gave himself out for such, wished to go to Spain ; they asked my son to arrest him. The same fellow, whom they caught near Poitiers, had secret despatches from the Spanish ambassador here. You can well imagine that they at once opened the letters. They found that the ambassador had written to Alberoni to be on his guard against making a treaty with my son, for as soon as the treaty was signed my son would poison the young King. But he, the ambassador, would give my son so much to do that he could not think of going to war ; he would raise up revolts against him all over the kingdom, nobles were to be sent into all the provinces to rouse them up ; their party was strong enough in Paris. They, the Spaniards, only needed to send money without stint ; he already had people on hand to whom to give it.

“I am very much afraid my son’s wife’s lame brother will again be found to be mixed up in this matter. My son has had the ambassador and two councillors of state arrested. . . . They talk of nothing here but of the conspiracy. It makes one’s hair stand on end to find what persons are concerned. . . . I see my son’s life endangered from on all sides, as you will see from these

two printed letters which were found in the Spanish ambassador's packet."

On December 29 Madame writes the following, and it will be remembered that the Duc du Maine was that son of the King and of Madame de Montespan whom Madame had so dreaded as a possible son-in-law, although he was the richest prince in France; also, that the Duc du Maine was the Regent's enemy because the latter in 1717 had caused the *parlement* to revoke the decree of Louis XIV, enabling his bastards to succeed to the throne: "I wanted to write to you two hours ago, but I could not; for I am so dreadfully upset that my hand trembles. My son has come to tell me that at last he has had to have his wife's brother, the Duc du Maine, and the latter's wife placed under arrest, for they are the heads of the abominable Spanish conspiracy. Everything is discovered; they have it in letters in the handwriting of the Spanish ambassador himself, and the prisoners have all confessed. So it is only too true that the Duc du Maine is the head of the conspiracy, and my son has been compelled to arrest him and his wife and all their people. The wife, as a *princesse du sang*, has been arrested by one of the King's four captains of the guards; but her husband, who was in the country, they have had arrested by a simple lieutenant of the guards. That makes a great difference between the two. Madame du Maine has been taken

to Dijon in Bourgogne in her nephew's *gouvernement*. Her husband they have taken to Dourlan to a small fortress; and their servants who are in the conspiracy have all been taken to the Bastile. You see, then, dear Louisa, that all this is horrible enough. But I must quickly dress and go down to Madame d'Orleans, for she is sure to be very much upset. . . .

"My heart is so heavy at having seen so many sad people to-day that I can hardly write. Madame d'Orleans I found very sad, but much more reasonable than Madame la Princesse. She says she cannot doubt, since my son shows such severity to her brother, he must have found great cause against him and his wife, but that she has no reason to complain because of that. But Madame la Princesse insists that it is impossible her daughter and her daughter's husband could have done anything wrong. She makes one quite impatient, for whatever one may say to her about this affair, that they have the handwriting of the ambassador who mentions him and his wife by name, that the others have confessed, it is all of no avail: enemies have done this, and her children are innocent. . . . You will soon hear abominable stories from Berlin. I imagine some devils have ridden out of hell into the air and want to start conspiracies."

In January she writes of her son: "I never see him drive out without trembling lest they bring him home

dead." She speaks of the Duc and Duchesse du Maine, Madame de Maintenon and the Princesse des Ursins, Alberoni and Cellamare, as "two little devils led by two old witches and upheld by two arch rogues."

In February she writes: "King Philip is not dead, but very ill. This King is a good man, but most stubborn. If they once put something into his head, no devil can get it out of him. The Princesse des Ursins has put it into his head that my son was trying to take his life. No one can rid him of that idea, so he hates my son abominably. War has been declared against Spain here, as well as in England."

It came out in time that the guilt of the conspiracy rested almost wholly with Madame du Maine. Some months later she made a confession which, to her anger and surprise, was read in council. Madame writes in January, 1720: "Madame du Maine has entirely cleared her husband and confesses that she began the conspiracy in his name without his knowing a word about it. All the other conspirators who were put in the Bastille say the same thing, so it must be true, though it is hard to believe. . . . She is desperate about my son having had her confession read in council. But could the crazy beast think my son would take everything on himself for her sake, as though he had invented the conspiracy, and declare her perfectly innocent? . . . Alberoni has written to my son and asked to be forgiven. . . . He



THE MEETING OF THE INFANTA AND THE KING

offers to reveal everything and to give my son the means of obtaining all Spain, saying that he knows just where lies the strength and the weakness of the kingdom. Is not that a pretty set of fellows?"

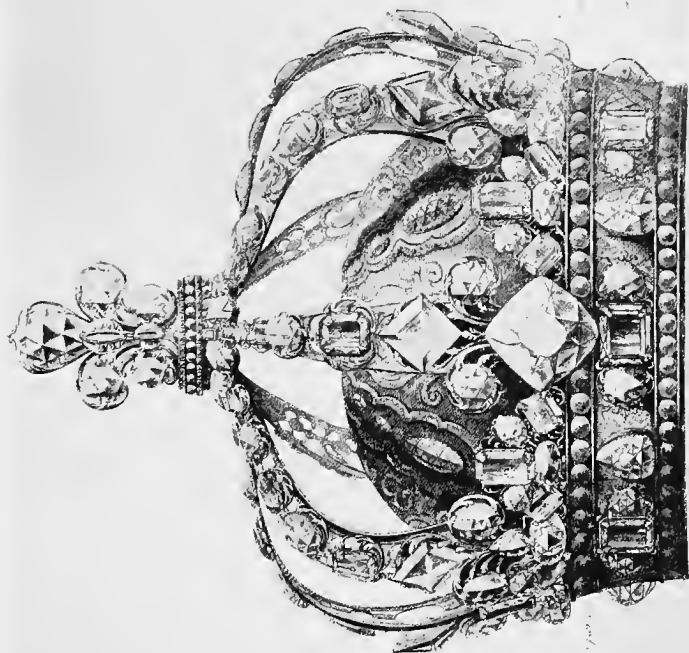
The Spanish troubles ended in 1720 with a peace which was to be sealed by a marriage alliance between the little King, Louis XV, and a still smaller daughter of Philip V. The little infanta, only four years old, was sent to be brought up at the French court. Madame, with her coach filled with princesses of the blood, drove fifteen miles to meet her. A contemporary engraving shows the triumphal entry of the little lady into Paris. Another engraving shows the meeting between the little King and his intended bride. Although the latter was only four years old, Madame fell completely in love with her. "She is too comical with the King," she writes; "she will say, 'I find him handsome, well made, with fine hair; but I know very well that if he does not talk to me more than he does, my affection for him will diminish.'" Again she would say to Madame, "I have a little secret to tell you"; and as the old lady bent down she would throw her arms about her neck and kiss her on both cheeks.

Madame has much to do in these days. She receives so many distinguished people — people for whom etiquette demands her rising — that her knees, to quote her own remark, creak like an old cart. She has to appear in an

entirely new rôle: at a banquet in the Palais Royal in honor of the alliance with Spain she has to rise and make several speeches. That she acquitted herself with credit, no one can doubt. She went to a ball, too, and sat with her son on a raised platform at one end of the hall. The little King wore 4,000,000 francs' worth of jewels, including the Regent diamond. After all, the marriage never took place, and the little infanta, after occupying the royal apartments at Versailles for three years, was shipped back to Spain by the Regent's successor.

* * * * *

In 1722 Madame had a serious accident. She had, as we know, always dreaded doctors and hated bleeding. "I like doctors who are careful with their patients, and try to follow nature," she had written in 1709; "to-morrow a new doctor is to take his oath of allegiance to me, a young man of forty-two. This is the fourth doctor I have had since I have been in France, and he will probably be the end of me because I am nearly fifteen years older than he." And again, prophetically as it turned out: "If our hour has not struck, the physicians will show skill; but if it has come, they will be blinded and do the contrary to what will help." She tells of her cousin, the Duc de Tremouille: "I am persuaded that he is dying, not from his lung trouble, but of the nine bleedings they have given him in two days." And again, a few days later: "The doctors bled him, the



Rem. by A. J. 1780.
4 Rubis
25 Saphires

THE CROWN OF LOUIS XV

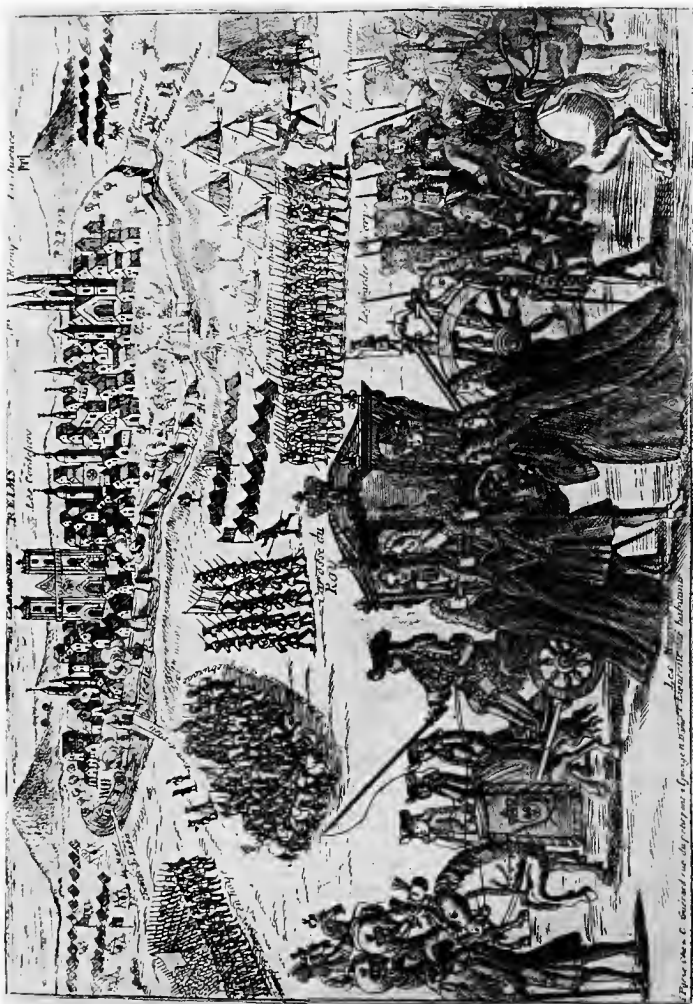
Duc de Tremouille, ten times, so frightfully that when they opened him, they found no other cause of death in him save that he had not a single drop of blood left in his veins."

Madame had long resisted, but at last had been induced to let them bleed her at intervals, because, as she tells us, if she did not, those who had bought posts in her household sat round in despair for fear she should die, and they lose their investment. She was not ill, but the doctors had told her that one really must be bled in May in order to remain healthy for the rest of the year. Her barber, she writes, was a good blood-letting, and had bled her before. But now as he was drawing the second plateful he suddenly began to look like grim death, tottered, and fell down in a swoon. He recovered enough to bind her arm, but did it so badly that she lost quantities of blood. She fell asleep, but on waking, knocked her arm against the table. The vein opened, and she lost a plateful more.

She wrote after this that she would have nothing more to do with the "French tricks" of blood letting and purging, that they did not suit a *Rauschenblattknechtchen* at all: "I have said farewell to all these works of the devil." But it was too late. There followed a time of fearful weakness; she is "tired as a poor dog," she writes. When she tries to kneel in chapel, she has not strength to do it: "Even to walk the length of the room makes me snort as if I had been chasing a hare."

Yet the King's coronation was coming. She was once more, since the Duchesse de Berry's death, the first lady in France. She was the only representative in the royal family of the real old régime. She declared that should God prolong her life until the 15th of October, she meant to travel to Rheims. She took the greatest interest in the preparations. They brought the crown and showed it to her, and she went into ecstasies over it. She considered it "the most beautiful, splendid, and magnificent thing in the whole world." From a gorgeous setting of pearls and topazes, emeralds and rubies shone forth the Regent diamond, while above was an even finer one, the great pear-shaped Sancy.

Barbier, the famous chronicler of the reign of Louis XV, was another person who was given a private view of the crown. He writes: "A few days ago, through friends, I saw at Monsieur Rondet's, the King's jeweller, the crown that has been made for the coronation of Louis XV. It is the most brilliant thing and the most perfect piece of work that has ever been seen. It has eight branches, the lower part forming a fleur-de-lis of diamonds, and above, all by itself, is a great fleur-de-lis in the air. The diamond called Sancy, which was the finest in the time of Louis XIV, forms the top of the fleur-de-lis, and there are four other large diamonds which form the leaves. Directly in front is the large diamond which the Regent bought for the King. It is



THE ENTRY OF LOUIS XV INTO RHEIMS

of surprising size; they call it the 'Millionnaire.' It is worth three millions [we have a later inventory in which it was valued at twelve millions]. They say the Grand Mogul has no larger one. They say, also but I do not know if it is true, that the man who brought it, not to be taken by surprise, had his thigh opened, and that they put it there, encased in lead, and that when he was here, he had his thigh opened again. It is certainly larger than a pigeon's egg. At the same time I saw the coach which the King has had made for his entry into Rheims, which will also be of great magnificence. The interior is all upholstered with flowered velvet and gold Spanish point lace. I also saw the golden *nef* which serves at the consecration for the King's dinner, and in which they put his whole *couvert*. It is a fine piece of work. Louis XIV had it made more than fifty years ago for the consecration of kings. It weighs, they say, a hundred and seven marks. Everything at Rheims will be of an astonishing magnificence. The troops are all dressed in new uniforms. There will be about ten thousand men. Of the lords only those go who have been appointed, and they will vie with each other in being magnificently dressed. . . . The King left for Rheims on the 24th of October. He passed through Paris, with all his household in new clothes, and very magnificent ones." An engraving shows him being received by the magistrates at Rheims.

Meanwhile, though weaker than ever, Madame had dragged herself about, and had even driven to Versailles to see their little Majesties. But she wrote that it seemed strange to her to see only children instead of the King whom she had so dearly loved. She stood at the side of the bed where she had seen him in his last agony, and where he had shown her so much kindness. She had the greatest difficulty in the world, she writes, in keeping back the blinding tears.

She would have stayed in Versailles, but she found her apartment in ruins, the floor of her hall of guards having fallen through. So she returned to Paris.

She tells of a touching demonstration in her honor there. When she went to the opera for the first time since her illness, she found the auditorium full to overflowing. They came and told her it was all for her sake, as a token of joy at seeing her again. "I am much in favor with the good Parisians," she wrote the next day to Louisa; "I am sorry the air is bad for me, or I would give the good, honest people more chances to see me." And again, "They do me more honor in Paris than I deserve."

The going to Rheims meant everything to her. She had often complained bitterly that there was no longer any court in France, and had declared that one who was accustomed to that atmosphere could never live in any other.

Now she was like a splendid old war-horse scenting the battle from afar. "I can get to heaven from Rheims," she writes, "as well as from anywhere else." She had no dread of the journey. To Monsieur Harling, the husband of her former governess, she wrote, remembering the nickname she had been called by as a little girl, "An old *Rauschenblattknecht* like me is not easily frightened." She took a strong elixir, however, prepared after a secret formula by a Dr. Garus who was himself too feeble to walk, but who would rise each morning at three to see that her concoction for the day was good and fresh. "He is really the best old man in the world," she writes of Dr. Garus.

Madame reached her destination safely, but her daughter, who had come to Rheims to meet her with the future Emperor of the Romans and her other children, was so horrified at the change in her appearance that she burst into tears. "I felt sad at her distress," Madame writes; for she wrote even here. She played her part in the great ceremony and enjoyed the sight of the clergy and nobles in their rich robes.

We have an engraving of the ceremony, though the picture is faint with age. Madame had the most prominent places reserved for herself, her daughter, and her grandchildren. They were on the right, in the front row, quite near the altar. The seats were covered with blue satin with golden fleurs-de-lis. During the cere-

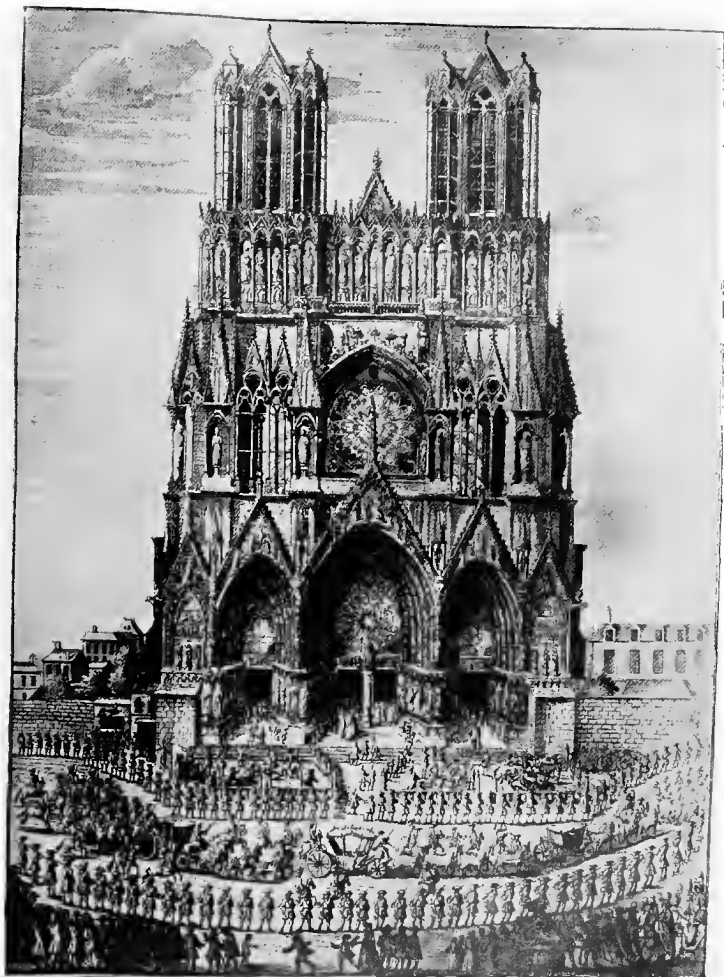
mony, just after the splendid ermine and velvet robes had been put on him, the King approached Madame and made her a special bow in the face of that huge assembly. "In the whole wide world," Madame writes from Rheims, "nothing finer can be seen or imagined than the King's coronation!"

But the *nunc dimittis* with which the ceremony ended was her own. "They have reported Madame dead at Soissons," writes Barbier, "but that is not true." But very soon afterwards he writes, "Madame has fallen ill; she has dropsy of the chest."

As a matter of fact, Madame returned from Rheims not much the worse for her journey, but the doctors saw fit to administer great doses of what she calls "green juice." "I am convinced," she writes, "that they have purged my soul out of my body." They had purged the poor woman eighty times in a single week!

Her letters grow sadder and sadder. It was autumn as she lay on her death-bed, and she had always dreaded autumn. "I love only spring and summer," she had written in the previous year; "autumn I cannot endure. I hate it worse than winter itself; it is like one continual death struggle." And again, still later: "I don't think much of autumn days; it is only a beautiful agony in which one sees everything die; and there can be nothing pleasant in that."

Her last letter is dated only five days before her death.



BEFORE THE CATHEDRAL AT RHEIMS

"Thank God, I am prepared to die," she writes, "and I only pray for strength to die bravely. It is not bad weather, although to-day a fine rain is setting in. But I do not think any weather will help me. Many complain of coughs and colds, but my malady lies deeper. Should I recover, you will find me the same friend as ever. Should this be the end, I die with full faith in my Redeemer."

Well might Saint-Simon say of Madame, "She was capable of tender and inviolable friendship." She had not seen the correspondent to whom she wrote these last lines for fifty-two years, but had long written to her by every mail.

Matthew Marais writes under date of December 4, 1722: "Madame, the Regent's mother, is very ill and has been so ever since the consecration. They can do nothing for her. Quack doctors are coming from everywhere and promising a great deal. But she tells every one they are charlatans, and that she is going to die. She has much courage and strength of mind. She saw her Lorraine family at Rheims and did not trouble about the journey, saying that one could die perfectly well anywhere. "The Regent always loved and respected her. She asked her son: 'Why do you weep? Must one not die?' To a lady of her court who wished to kiss her hand she said, 'You may kiss my lips; I am going to a land where all are equal.'"

Under the date December 8 Marais writes: "This night, at three in the morning, Madame died at St. Cloud. All Europe will be in mourning — not only court but family mourning. She is the great-grandmother of the King, or at least the wife and widow of his great-grandfather. This is through the Duchesse de Savoie, who was daughter of Monsieur by a first marriage; and *her* daughter was the Duchesse de Bourgogne, the mother of the King. She, Madame, is also his great-aunt. Spain, Lorraine, Savoy, England (through Hanover), the Palatine Elector, and all the courts of Germany — all are connected with her. There will be grand and complete mourning for six whole months. She was in her seventy-first year. The King gains thereby a pension of more than 50,000 crowns, and the appanage of Montargis which she enjoyed falls back to the Regent. We lose a good princess, a thing which is rare."

At the depositing of the body in St. Denis, and again at the service held forty days later, incidents happened which would have made Madame herself laugh heartily had she been alive; and we may be sure that her sympathies would not have been with the ducal pretensions. "I once had a comical dispute with the poor Archbishop of Rheims," she had written in 1710; "he was, as your Grace knows, the first duke and peer. He once said to me, as we were walking together in the valley at St. Germain, 'It seems to me, Madame, that you don't think much of us French

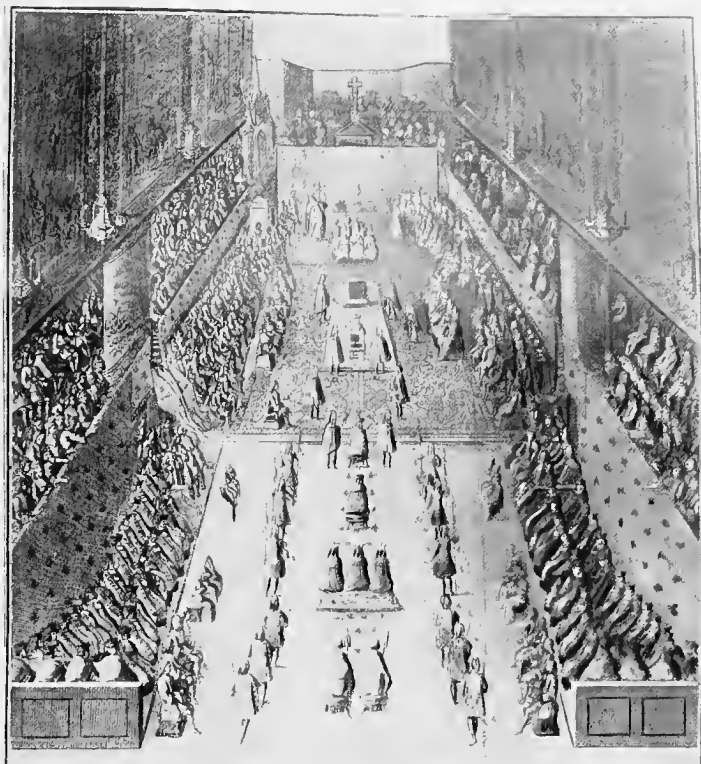
dukes, and that you greatly prefer your German princes.' I answered dryly and sharply, 'That is true.' 'But if you won't compare us to them,' he said, 'to what will you compare us?' I answered, 'Turkish viziers and pachas.' 'Why?' he asked. 'Like them,' I said, 'you have all the dignities, and no better birth. As the Grand Seigneur makes pachas and viziers, so the King makes you what you are. It is only God and their fathers and mothers who make our German princes, so you cannot compare with them. You are subjects, and they are free.' I thought the good man would jump out of his skin, he was so angry. But he had no answer at all ready." And again, earlier, she had written: "The arrogance of the dukes is going too far; they wish to be above all princes. A German prince of a really good house would go wild if he were to come here and have to have disputes every day with the vermin." And still again: "I once gave one of these dukes a good lesson. He placed himself at the King's table ahead of the Prince of Deux Ponts. I said out loud, 'How does it come that the Duc de Saint-Simon gets so close to the Prince of Deux Ponts; does he want to ask him to take one of his sons as a page?' Every one began to laugh so that he had to go away."

After this, one can better appreciate what Matthew Marais writes: "At the obsequies of Madame in St. Denis there was a great discussion between Mademoiselle de Charolais [daughter of a prince of the blood], who was

doing the honors, and the Duchesse d'Humières, who accompanied her. The Duchess wished to walk at her side; the Princess took two equerries on her right and on her left, and thus prevented the Duchess from approaching. When it came to kneeling, the Duchess put her square in the same line as the Princess, who asked her in a very loud tone did she wish to place herself ahead of her. She answered that she was placing herself at her side, where it was her privilege to be. They called Monsieur de Dreux, master of ceremonies [all this while poor Madame's body was about to descend into the vault], who said that that was the rule. The Princess was not at all satisfied. On her return she wrote a very emphatic letter to the Regent about the prestige the royal house was losing and about the usurpations of the dukes. The Comte de Charolais said that if any duke should come to his house, he would throw him out of the window. They talk of nothing less than taking away all the honors from the dukes, the King having the power to do so. The Duc de Saint-Simon, because of this incident, did not come to the Louvre to pay his respects on the death of Madame."

The Duchesse d'Humières, at the command of the King, finally made excuses to Mademoiselle de Charolais, but in an *assez légère* manner. Even then Madame was not to be disposed of without more trouble.

Marais heads his entries on February 5, 1723, with "Service for Madame at St. Denis. Dispute with the Bishops."



THE CORONATION CEREMONY



THE CORONATION CEREMONY

